GREAT MEN of CANADA



By

JOHN HENDERSON

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GREAT MEN *of* CANADA

GREAT MEN OF CANADA

Life Stories
of a few of Canada's Great Men
told in narrative form

By JOHN HENDERSON
Author of "WEST INDIES," "ROUND THE WORLD," ETC.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE HON. G. HOWARD FERGUSON
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF
THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE author desires to express his appreciation of the assistance afforded him by many authorities on the histories of the Great Men mentioned in this book, and to acknowledge his indebtedness to a multitude of volumes containing exhaustive biographies of the splendid Canadians lightly sketched herein.

The Archives at Ottawa have been found rich in material, and the officials of the Toronto Public Library the custodians of a wealth of historical knowledge which they distribute with great courtesy and prodigious generosity.

He also desires to put on record his appreciation of the kindly introduction contributed by the Minister of Education, the Hon. G. Howard Ferguson.

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PREFACE

THE present volume, which is designed to interest young Canadians in some of the most notable figures in our History, has been prepared with a view to its being generally used for school libraries in Ontario.

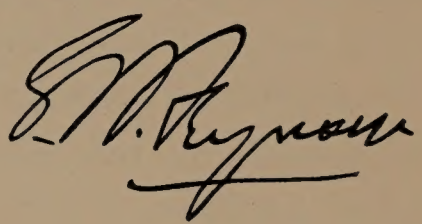
From the biographies I have read they seem to have been written in a vivid and striking way from the standpoint, in each case, of impartial appreciation. The effect, in my judgment, is to prove the truth of a criticism one hears continually, that the impressiveness of Canadian History rests more upon the careers of those who discovered and developed the country, than upon the events that mark the development.

The grounds for this belief can be easily stated. The actual narrative of Canada covers scarcely more than three hundred years. A great portion of this period deals with pioneer conditions working themselves out at a relatively slow pace. Naturally, therefore, the discoverer, the pathfinder, and the pioneer administrator are the pivots around whom the interest of the story revolves. In the earlier stages a few great men suffice to illustrate what was accomplished, but from the middle of the eighteenth century down to the present day there can be selected some really

remarkable personages, without whose labours we could not have had the Dominion of Canada to-day.

Fortunately for us it is possible to draw pen pictures of these men, as the author of the book has drawn them, with an acute feeling of the romance of their lives, and the permanent character of their accomplishments.

There are those who believe that all the great men in the story of Canada belong to the past, and that we could not find their equals in the present age. I do not share this opinion, but acquiesce in the wisdom of carrying these biographies no further down in political history than the day of Sir John A. Macdonald, and the day of Sir Charles Tupper.



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The Explorers



Sir Alexander Mackenzie

1755 - 1820

The Explorers

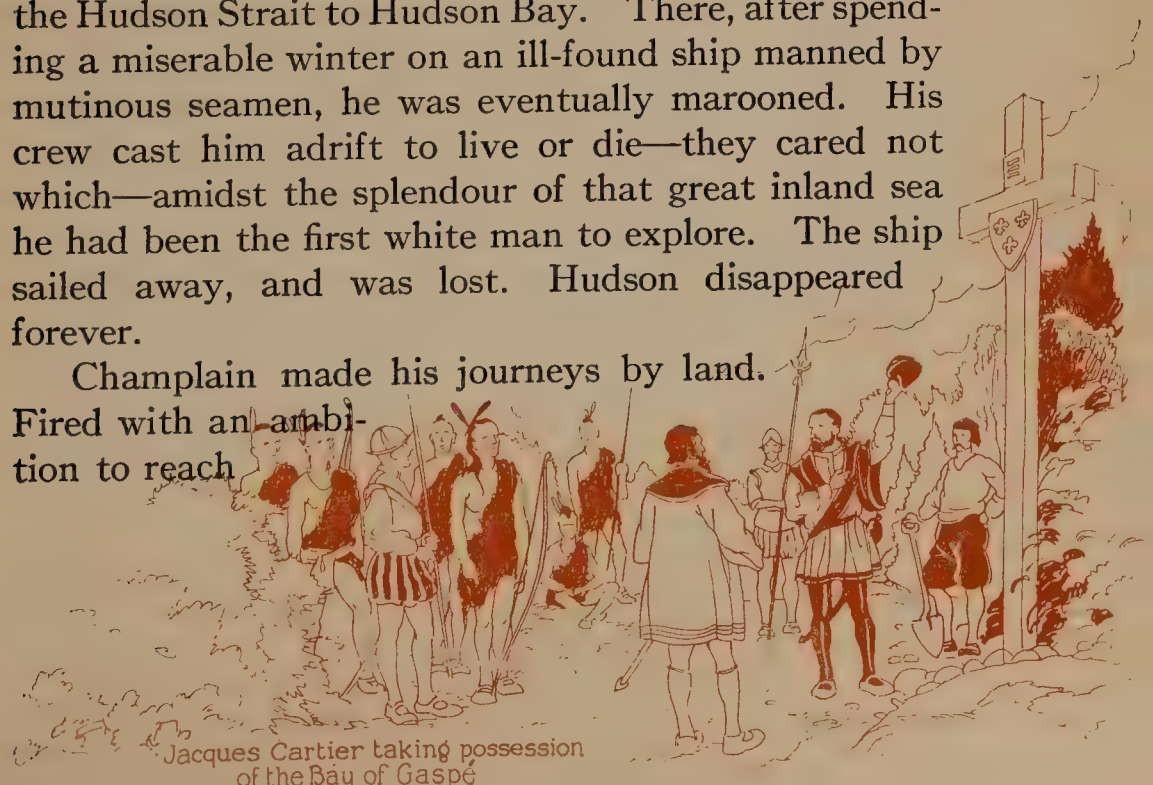
THE early history of Canada is, of course, mainly a story of Exploration and Explorers. The voyages and journeys of Jacques Cartier, Henry Hudson, Champlain, Radisson, Jean Nicolet, LaSalle and others, gave to the unexplored wildernesses of North America a geographical importance.

First Columbus made his voyages to the West Indies and Central America. Then, in 1534, Cartier sailed up the St. Lawrence and so brought Canada to the notice of Europe.

In 1579 Francis Drake, during his romantic voyage round the world, anchored off the coast of British Columbia: but no developments resulted from this visit.

In 1610 Henry Hudson, who had already discovered the Hudson River, stumbled almost by accident along the Hudson Strait to Hudson Bay. There, after spending a miserable winter on an ill-found ship manned by mutinous seamen, he was eventually marooned. His crew cast him adrift to live or die—they cared not which—amidst the splendour of that great inland sea he had been the first white man to explore. The ship sailed away, and was lost. Hudson disappeared forever.

Champlain made his journeys by land. Fired with an ambition to reach



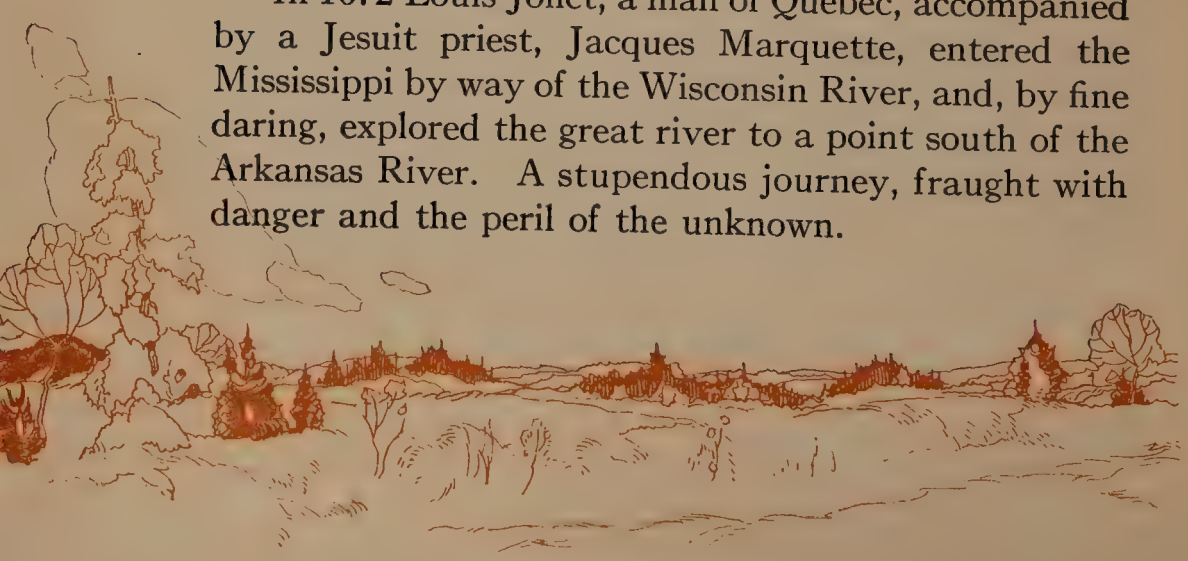
Jacques Cartier taking possession of the Bay of Gaspé

China overland from the St. Lawrence, he penetrated deep into the heart of Canada. He reached the Great Lakes and explored the country with a remarkable thoroughness; to him must be given the credit of being the first to realize the possibilities of this vast Northern continent.

The story of Radisson, if it were fully known, would be of infinite value and interest to the modern historian. Radisson, as a youth, was captured by Indians at Three Rivers, and taken south to the Iroquois country, for torture and death. He was saved, romantically, by an aged chief, and lived the life of an Indian for a year or two. Eventually he escaped and turned explorer. From Three Rivers Radisson journeyed through Lake Michigan and discovered the Mississippi. He made several trading journeys from Quebec to the west of Lake Superior; once, travelling north, he reached Hudson Bay, and from there journeyed back to Quebec. Eventually he was heavily punished for trading without permission. Obviously in those old times of great romance, customs officials displayed a certain narrowness.

Nicolet in 1634 made a wonderful journey through Lake Michigan and travelled extensively in the western districts; he encountered new tribes of Indians, and discovered, in the territory now covered by Wisconsin, a new country for trade.

In 1672 Louis Joliet, a man of Quebec, accompanied by a Jesuit priest, Jacques Marquette, entered the Mississippi by way of the Wisconsin River, and, by fine daring, explored the great river to a point south of the Arkansas River. A stupendous journey, fraught with danger and the peril of the unknown.



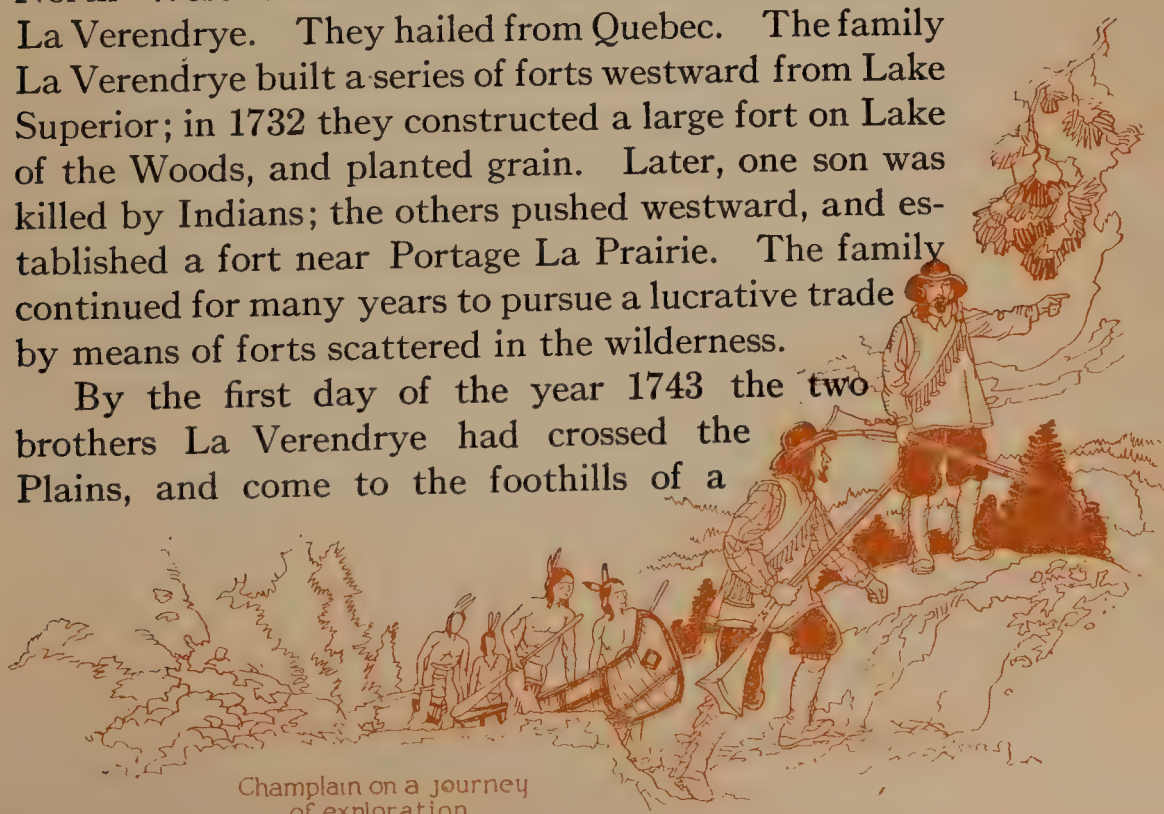
LaSalle was probably the greatest of all these early explorers. In 1682 he voyaged down the Mississippi to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico, and proclaimed the district, south of the Ohio to the Gulf, a state under the sovereignty of his King, Louis the Fourteenth of France. This district he named Louisiana.

Champlain, Nicolet, certain Jesuit priests and a multitude of fur traders, may be said to have been the first explorers of Ontario. Frontenac came a little later and surveyed the country in the manner of a potentate.

Newly appointed Governor of Canada, Frontenac made the journey, magnificently, from Quebec to the "gateway of the Iroquois country." There, at a place where the City of Kingston now stands, he established a fort; Fort Frontenac — probably the first important centre established in Ontario. That was in 1673.

The first white men to attempt a systematic exploration of the immeasurable magnificence of the Great North West were a father and two sons, named La Verendrye. They hailed from Quebec. The family La Verendrye built a series of forts westward from Lake Superior; in 1732 they constructed a large fort on Lake of the Woods, and planted grain. Later, one son was killed by Indians; the others pushed westward, and established a fort near Portage La Prairie. The family continued for many years to pursue a lucrative trade by means of forts scattered in the wilderness.

By the first day of the year 1743 the two brothers La Verendrye had crossed the Plains, and come to the foothills of a



Champlain on a journey of exploration

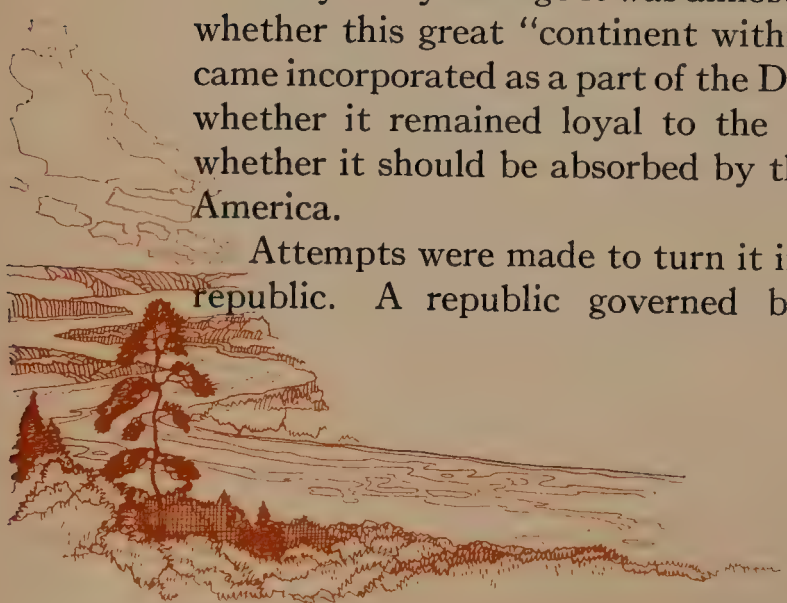
range of mountains which, most historians agree, must have been the Rockies.

And that was the beginning of the history of the Great North West.

Exactly how many square miles of land and lake and flowing water are contained within the boundaries of that vast section of country our grandfathers called the North West Territories can be determined. Add together the acreage of Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the other Districts of the West, Assiniboia, the Yukon and those stretches of what is yet wilderness to the northward; and you measure the expanse of the old time North West Territories. In mileage it is a place of almost incredible vastness; in wealth of minerals—gold and other minerals— its value is still unmeasured. Unmeasured and unmeasurable, but according to experts of infinite richness. As an agricultural country, its development has been phenomenal. Its wheat fields are thousands of miles in extent, and they produce the highest type of grain known to agriculture. Its rivers abound in fish, and its untilled areas are covered with forests so vast that many of them are not yet properly explored. These forests represent timber of fabulous value.

Sixty odd years ago it was almost a matter of chance whether this great "continent within a continent" became incorporated as a part of the Dominion of Canada; whether it remained loyal to the British Empire; or whether it should be absorbed by the United States of America.

Attempts were made to turn it into an independent republic. A republic governed by half-breeds and



Radisson discovered the Mississippi River

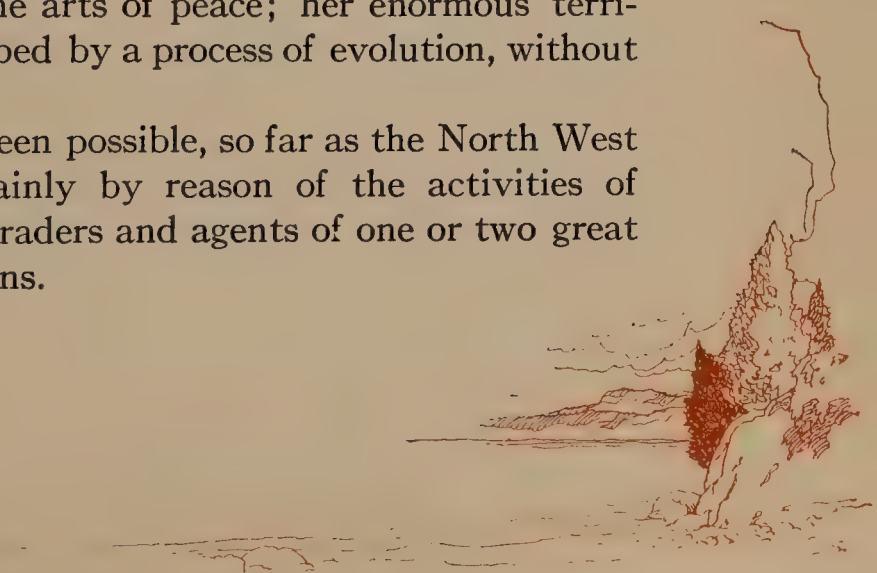
adventurers. It was almost a No-Man's Land—though the Hudson's Bay Company claimed ownership of it on the basis of certain traditional rights.

After Confederation, the Government of Canada bought out the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company in regard to the territories extending from Ontario to the Rockies, and a little later arranged for the inclusion of the district beyond the Rockies to the Pacific within the Dominion of Canada. These matters are dealt with in other chapters.

But there remains the question, by what means were these immense plains and magnificent mountains, this vast immeasurable wilderness, brought within the boundaries of civilization? No armed force was ever used to conquer the aborigines; no government ever sent great expeditions of armed men to treat with the natives. Yet, when the Dominion of Canada came into being in 1867, it was able peacefully to occupy, to absorb within its boundaries, a region greater in extent even than the vast territory already governed by Ottawa.

It was a stupendous annexation, unparalleled in the history of civilization. It is a glorious thing to remember that with the exception of those insignificant affairs at Red River, the Dominion of Canada has come into being without conquest by arms. Canada is a nation born of the arts of peace; her enormous territories were absorbed by a process of evolution, without the aid of war.

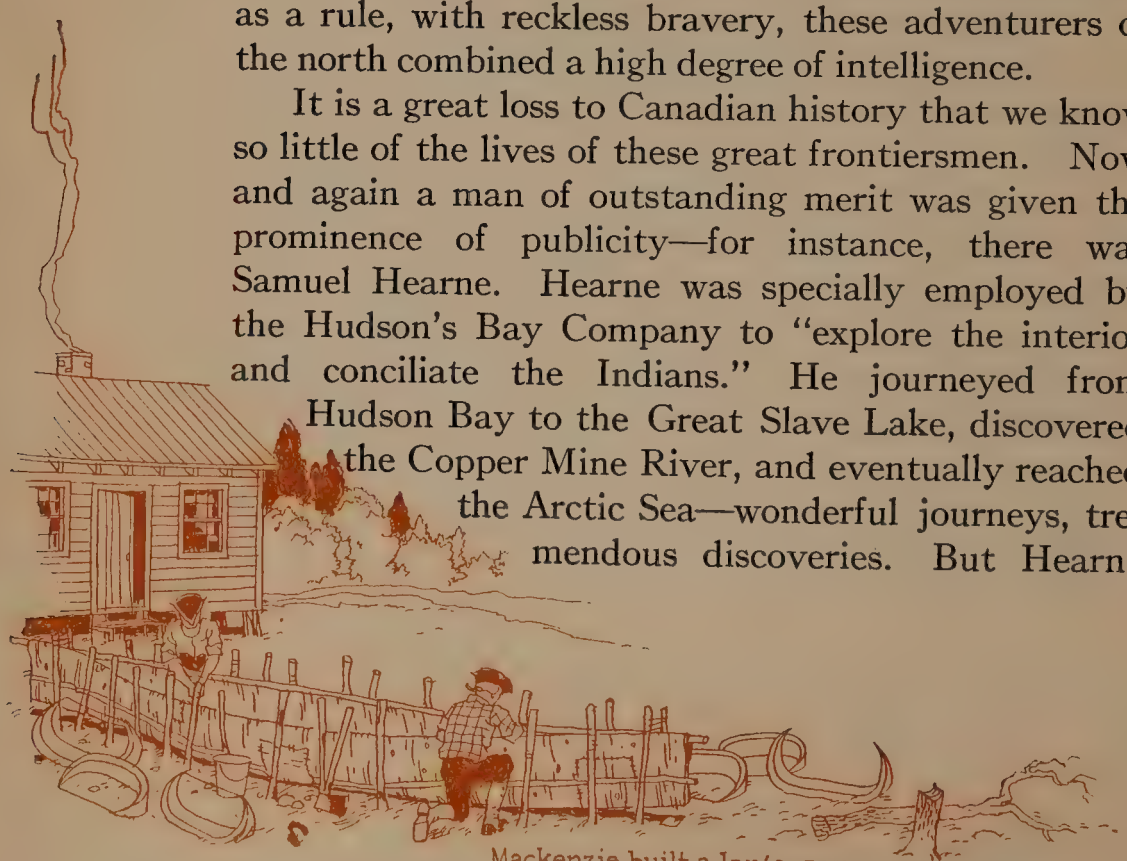
All this has been possible, so far as the North West is concerned, mainly by reason of the activities of certain intrepid traders and agents of one or two great trading institutions.



The work of all the early explorers was magnificent, but, in effect, incomplete. Before the American War of Independence, this incompleteness was not perhaps of immense importance. But the creation of the United States entailed a lamentable constriction of the seaboard of British America. Also, it closed to the traders of the North West the use of navigable rivers flowing from the Rockies, by way of the Mississippi, to the south. The rich lands of the West were practically impossible of access. The terrific barriers formed by the Rockies had not yet been broken through. It was known that, within comparatively easy distance of the eastern foothills of the tremendous range, the mighty Pacific offered traffic routes to the markets of the world; but no path had yet been found to open up that traffic.

It is impossible to measure the value to Canada of the heroic work performed by those old time trappers and frontiersmen. Braver pioneers never existed; and, as a rule, with reckless bravery, these adventurers of the north combined a high degree of intelligence.

It is a great loss to Canadian history that we know so little of the lives of these great frontiersmen. Now and again a man of outstanding merit was given the prominence of publicity—for instance, there was Samuel Hearne. Hearne was specially employed by the Hudson's Bay Company to "explore the interior and conciliate the Indians." He journeyed from Hudson Bay to the Great Slave Lake, discovered the Copper Mine River, and eventually reached the Arctic Sea—wonderful journeys, tremendous discoveries. But Hearne



Mackenzie built a large canoe

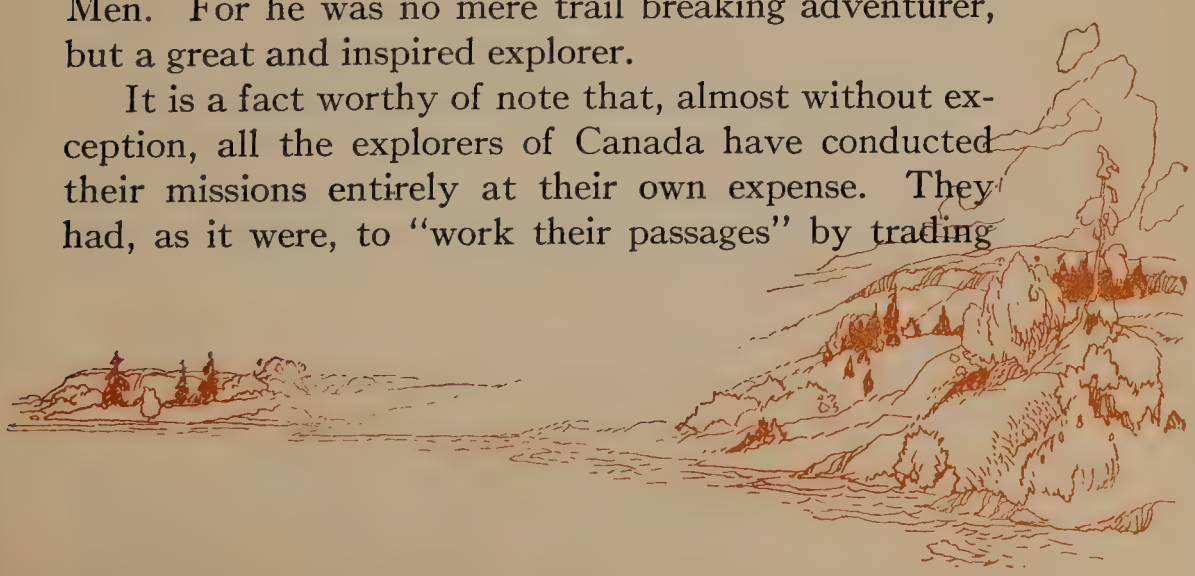
was only one of a score of great adventurers. It is probable that, in those days, many men whose deeds were unheralded, and unsung, accomplished journeys equally magnificent.

Although it is impossible to pretend that the discoveries of Alexander Mackenzie, a trader employed by the North West Company, represent the average journey of the old time trapper, it is certainly accurate to suggest that the courage possessed by Mackenzie was merely typical of the courage of all the old time frontiersmen. Adequate records were kept of Mackenzie's voyages. If we examine these we can find, not only some account of Mackenzie's adventures, but also an indication of the splendid spirit which in those days inspired simple pioneers to become supermen; pathfinders and adventurers *sans peur et sans reproche*.

The honour of breaking the first trail across the ramparts of the Rockies belongs to this Alexander Mackenzie; a man of immense resolution, courage and foresight. It was more than ten years later that the American explorers, Lewis and Clark, emulated Mackenzie's feat by reaching the sea from the States across the American range.

Alexander Mackenzie thus becomes a figure worthy of prominent place in the history of Canada's Great Men. For he was no mere trail breaking adventurer, but a great and inspired explorer.

It is a fact worthy of note that, almost without exception, all the explorers of Canada have conducted their missions entirely at their own expense. They had, as it were, to "work their passages" by trading



with the natives. With the exception of Champlain and Frontenac, each had to encounter the necessity of providing for his own existence, in addition to braving the dangers of the unknown.

To a large extent this was the case with Mackenzie. He worked for a trading concern which considered profit the first and last essential. A concern content with existing conditions, and eager for expansion only along certain beaten tracks. Mackenzies extended voyages of discovery were looked upon with disfavour; it was only because he established new trading posts en route, and so produced new profits, that he was permitted to continue. Alexander Mackenzie had come from Scotland in the year 1779. He was a scion of an old Highland family; of the Mackenzies of Seaforth. He had received a fair education, including the experience of a year or two's hard work in the coasting craft which then abounded round the rugged coast of the west coast of Scotland. He entered the office of a fur trading company in Montreal. At the end of five years his employers selected him to lead a trading expedition to Detroit. This entailed a dangerous journey through a country infested by hostile Indians and cut-throat adventurers. Upper Canada was still a vast forest, into which a few United Empire Loyalists, in order to escape persecution at the hands of the recently revolted Americans, were only just beginning to settle. Mackenzie made the journey by way of the St. Lawrence, surmounting the dangers of the rapids, and avoiding encounter with the groups of Indians who infested the great waterway. Leaving Lake Ontario at Fond du Lac—a centre destined eventually to become

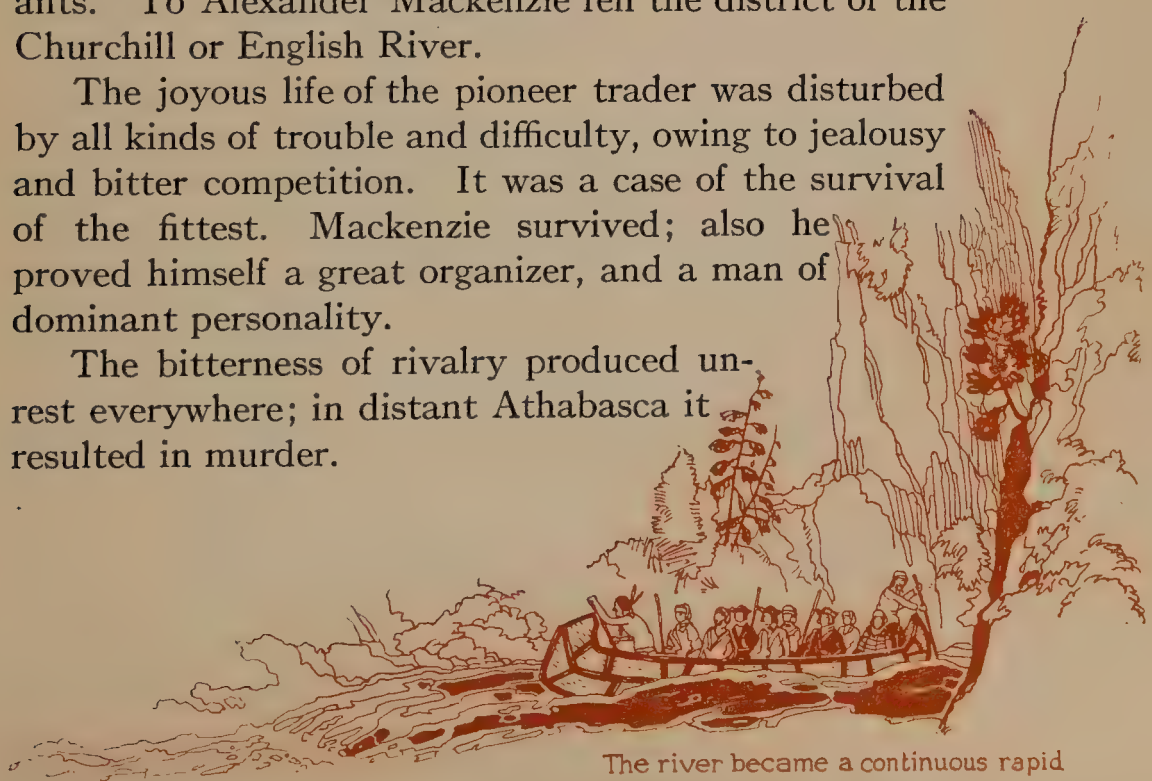
the City of Hamilton—by portaging to the Grand River, and descending the stream to Lake Erie, Mackenzie and his men coasted the lake to their destination.

Detroit was found to be in a very unsettled and precarious state, but Mackenzie remained there a full year, conducting the affairs of his company in a satisfactory manner.

He was promoted to a senior position in the company and sent to Grand Portage, a place some forty miles south-west of the spot where Fort William now stands, and at that period a very important centre of the North West trade. Five or six hundred representatives of long established companies, with deep rooted interests in the West, controlled the fur trade of the district. The company Mackenzie represented was regarded with disfavour by the existing companies. The newcomers were rivals, interlopers come to share a rich trade already adequately divided. The head of Mackenzie's house established his new headquarters, and then roughly mapped out the whole of the North West, apportioning great divisions to his chief assistants. To Alexander Mackenzie fell the district of the Churchill or English River.

The joyous life of the pioneer trader was disturbed by all kinds of trouble and difficulty, owing to jealousy and bitter competition. It was a case of the survival of the fittest. Mackenzie survived; also he proved himself a great organizer, and a man of dominant personality.

The bitterness of rivalry produced unrest everywhere; in distant Athabasca it resulted in murder.



The river became a continuous rapid

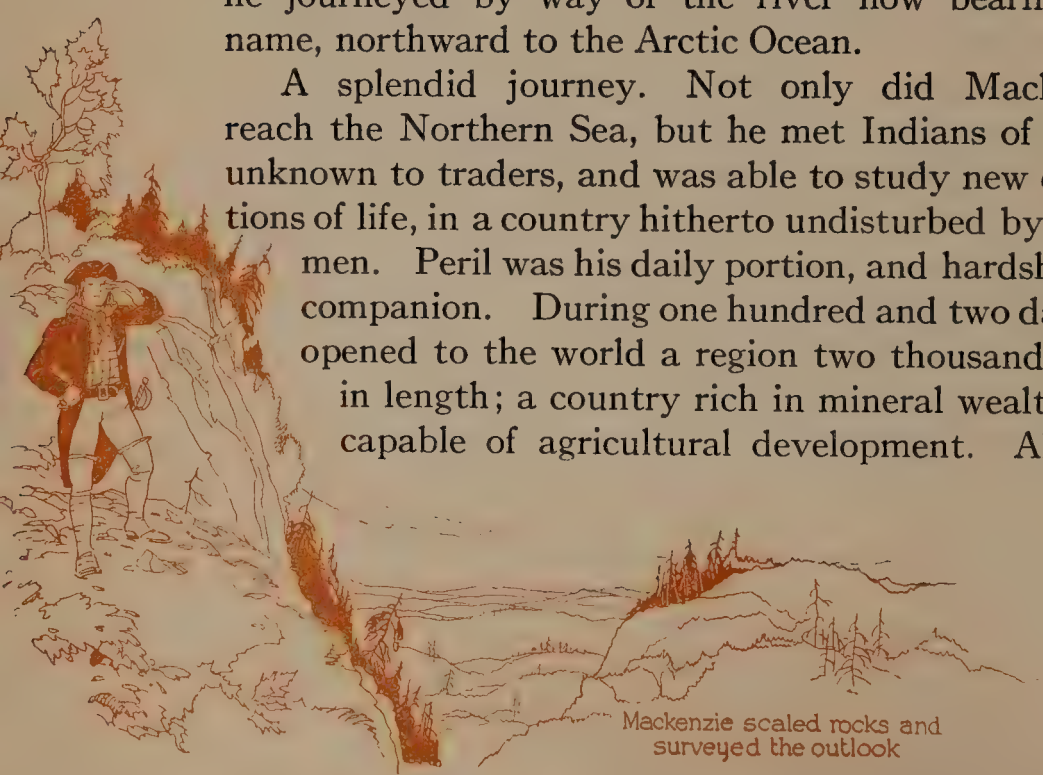
At last affairs became so critical that two or three of the large firms amalgamated and established the North West Company.

Athabasca was the danger point, and there Mackenzie was sent in full control. In that distant, unexplored country, at the early age of twenty-four, Mackenzie found himself a big chief; it was his first big "independent command." He had unlimited power so far as his own company was concerned, and thus a very considerable influence over the natives.

Eventually he established on the lake a great trading post, which he called Chipewyan. At that time this was the most remote trading post in the Northern Territories. It was built on the shore of Lake Athabasca, a mile or two east of the entrance of the Elk River into the lake, and, geographically, it commanded easy communication with the waterways we now know as the Great Slave, and Great Bear Lakes, and the Mackenzie River.

It was from this post that Alexander Mackenzie started on his first voyage of discovery, during which he journeyed by way of the river now bearing his name, northward to the Arctic Ocean.

A splendid journey. Not only did Mackenzie reach the Northern Sea, but he met Indians of tribes unknown to traders, and was able to study new conditions of life, in a country hitherto undisturbed by white men. Peril was his daily portion, and hardship his companion. During one hundred and two days he opened to the world a region two thousand miles in length; a country rich in mineral wealth and capable of agricultural development. Also he



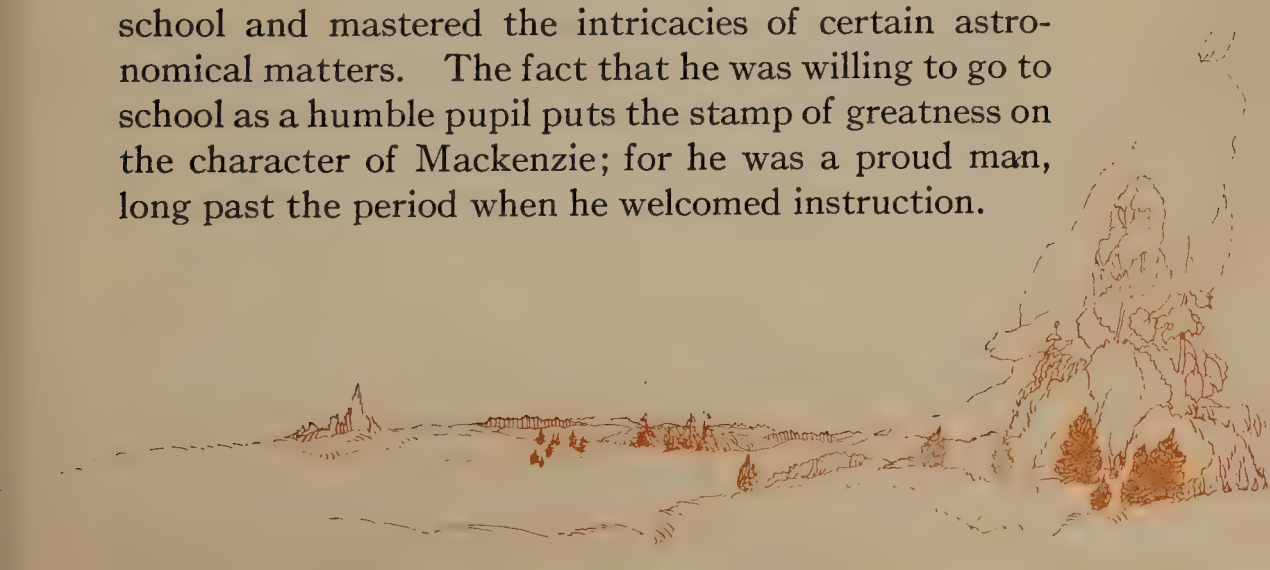
Mackenzie scaled rocks and surveyed the outlook

established the approximate course of the Yukon River.

The world recognized this first journey of Mackenzie's as a great feat of exploration, but the directors of his company viewed it in a frankly hostile spirit. They wanted, not explorers, but trading agents in their employ. Mackenzie ignored this hostility. He journeyed to the headquarters at Grand Portage, made his reports, and informed his directors that he intended to return to England for a year, in order to acquire certain astronomical knowledge, and purchase proper instruments. He wished to be better equipped, scientifically, in his next expedition.

There may appear a suggestion of effrontery in this action of a young man in the face of the hostility of his directors. But no effrontery was intended by Mackenzie. He was a bold man, determined to accomplish a project no man had yet succeeded in accomplishing. He had determined to blaze a trail to the Pacific by way of impregnable Rockies. He had made up his mind that he would be the first man to cross the American continent. North of Mexico that feat had not been accomplished. Nothing could alter his purpose, nothing could affect his determination. So he went to England.

This man, already experienced in leadership and adventure, went to England, and for a year attended school and mastered the intricacies of certain astronomical matters. The fact that he was willing to go to school as a humble pupil puts the stamp of greatness on the character of Mackenzie; for he was a proud man, long past the period when he welcomed instruction.



When the year finished, he returned to Grand Portage and then to Chipewyan. From this place, on October 10th, 1792, Mackenzie started out on his great journey westward.

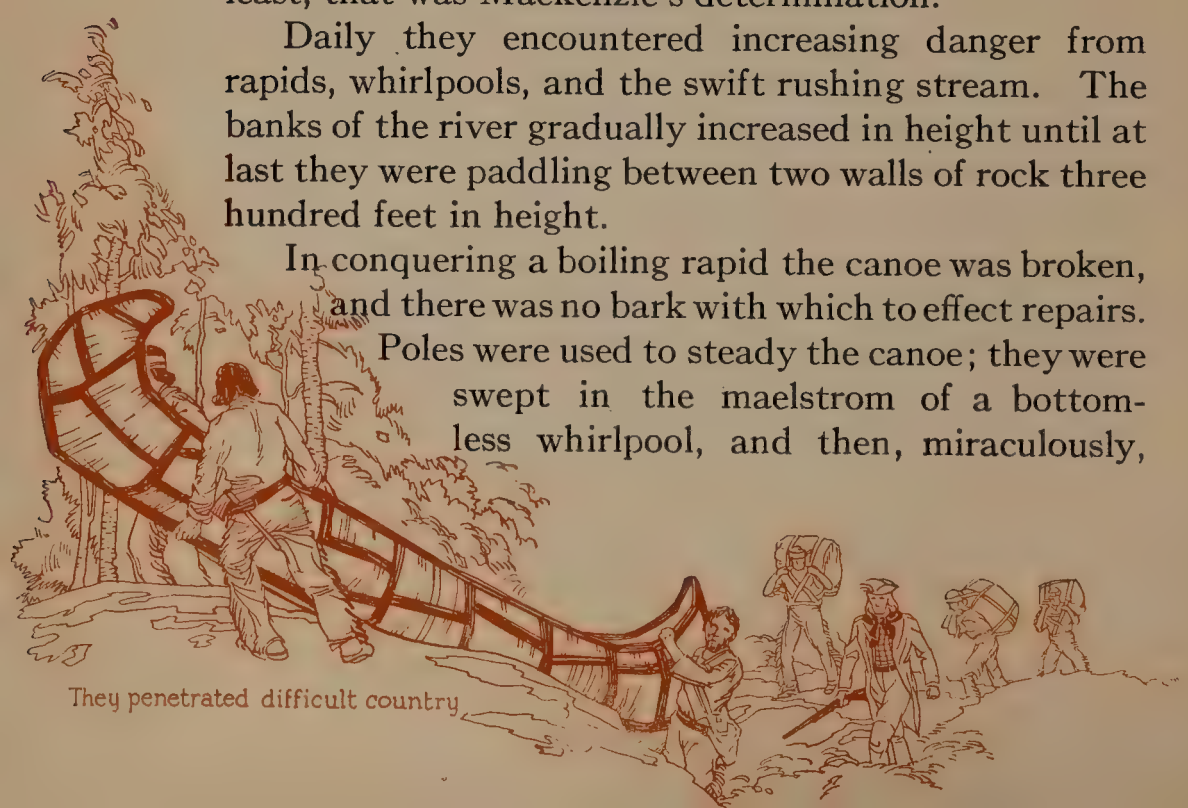
Loitering on the way to arrange for new trade by which his directors might be propitiated, he reached Peace River, and there, on November 7th, he built his winter quarters and prepared the details of his expedition.

He built a great canoe twenty-five feet long, with a beam of four feet nine inches, strong enough to carry the whole party with their belongings and a fair amount of trade goods. It had a capacity for three thousand pounds, and was light enough, when empty, to be carried by two men. The party consisted of ten men: Alexander Mackenzie, in command; Alexander MacKay, second in command; six French-Canadians and two Indians. Seldom has so great an adventure begun with such meagre equipment.

On May 9th, 1793, the party started out with the resolution to win through or perish in the attempt—at least, that was Mackenzie's determination.

Daily they encountered increasing danger from rapids, whirlpools, and the swift rushing stream. The banks of the river gradually increased in height until at last they were paddling between two walls of rock three hundred feet in height.

In conquering a boiling rapid the canoe was broken, and there was no bark with which to effect repairs. Poles were used to steady the canoe; they were swept in the maelstrom of a bottomless whirlpool, and then, miraculously,



They penetrated difficult country

swept out again into a raging, unconquerable stream. The river became a continuous rapid; but, again miraculously, they made the bank in safety.

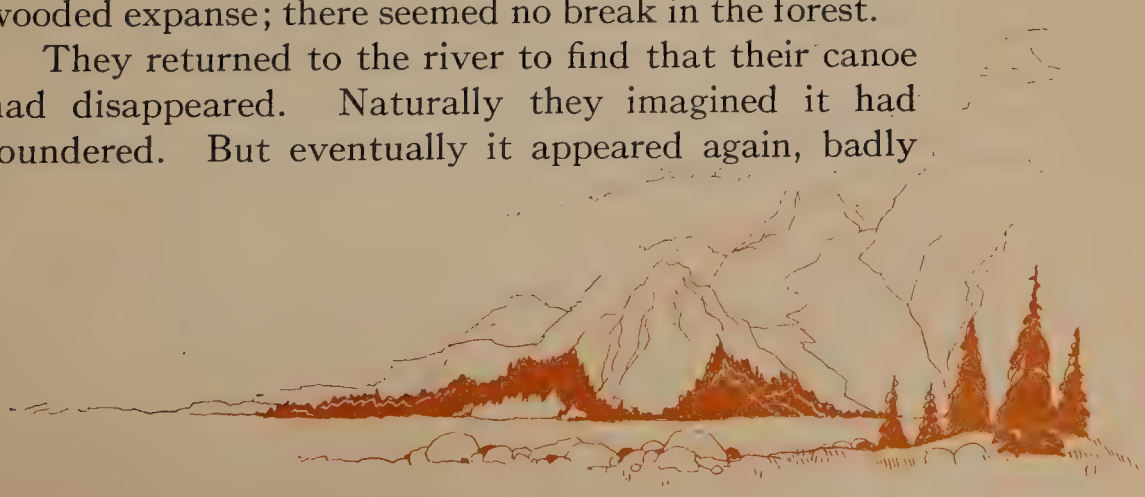
Mackenzie scaled rocks and surveyed the outlook. He found: "The river is not more than fifty yards wide, and flows between stupendous rocks, from whence huge fragments sometimes tumble down, and falling from such height form the beach between the rocky projections."

Further observations were made and it was discovered that these rapids extended a distance of nine or ten miles.

It was determined to make this portion of the journey overland. They dragged the canoe through thickets, over gigantic rocks—penetrating an immensely difficult country. One day they would progress a mile, on another two miles . . . But at last they passed the falls, and once more embarked. They were now completely surrounded by mountains, and the weather was bitterly cold. Frequently it was necessary to land in order to build fires to thaw out their limbs.

At last the fork of the Peace River was reached and no one knew which branch of the stream should be followed. They selected one, and journeyed on and on, day after day, each day more tortuous than the last. Even Mackenzie began to lose hope. He landed with his lieutenant, and they scaled a mountain to spy out the land. There was nothing to be seen but a vast, wooded expanse; there seemed no break in the forest.

They returned to the river to find that their canoe had disappeared. Naturally they imagined it had foundered. But eventually it appeared again, badly



broken; the force of the current had been too great for its strength. The battered craft was repaired as well as possible, and the journey resumed. Mosquitoes tortured them—they seemed to be voyaging through Avernus.

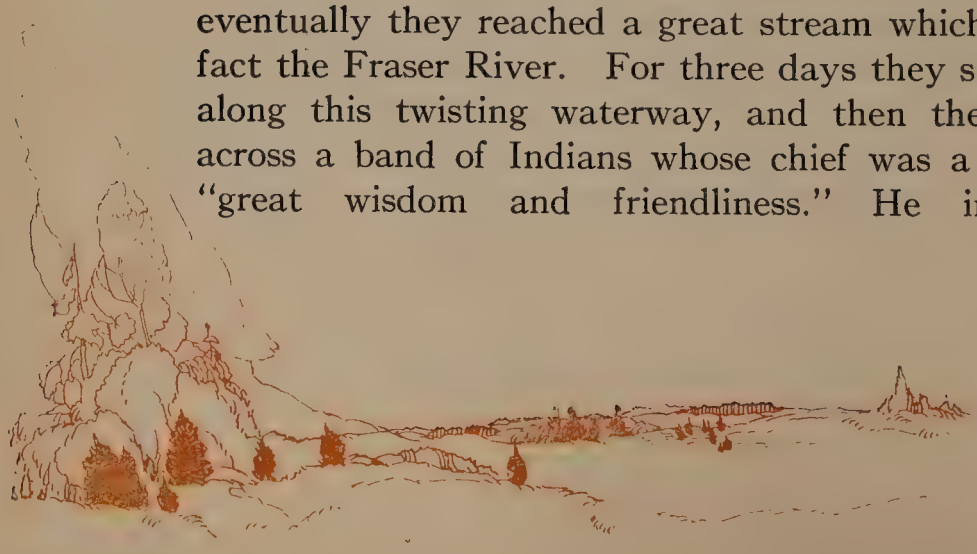
After many days they came across some Indians—wild men who had never before seen white men. With much difficulty one of these wild men was induced to act as a guide. He piloted them from the main river to a tributary stream, thence to a small lake. Mackenzie decided that this lake was "the highest and southern-most source of Peace River."

Crossing this lake they found a beaten path, eight hundred and seventeen paces long, to another lake. On each side of them were mountains.

But, although at the time they did not know it, they had attained the apparently impossible: they had found a path through the mountains.

From a third lake they came to another rushing torrent along which the ill-used canoe tossed and struggled; the boiling waters of this stream seemed worse than anything they had seen even on the Peace River. The craft was smashed in, and its condition became so hopeless that the Indians of the crew, "without attempting to help, sat down and gave vent to tears."

However, the old canoe was patched up again, and eventually they reached a great stream which was in fact the Fraser River. For three days they struggled along this twisting waterway, and then they came across a band of Indians whose chief was a man of "great wisdom and friendliness." He informed



Mackenzie that he was out of his track; that he should have turned off the main stream and pursued his way along a tributary flowing to the westward.

The canoe was now in an utterly hopeless condition. Mackenzie landed his party, and, with much difficulty, they constructed a new one. In this new craft they turned back and laboured up stream to the waterway leading to the west. Here, safeguarding their return journey, they buried a considerable portion of their remaining provisions, stowed away the new canoe, and prepared to pursue their voyage to the Pacific on foot.

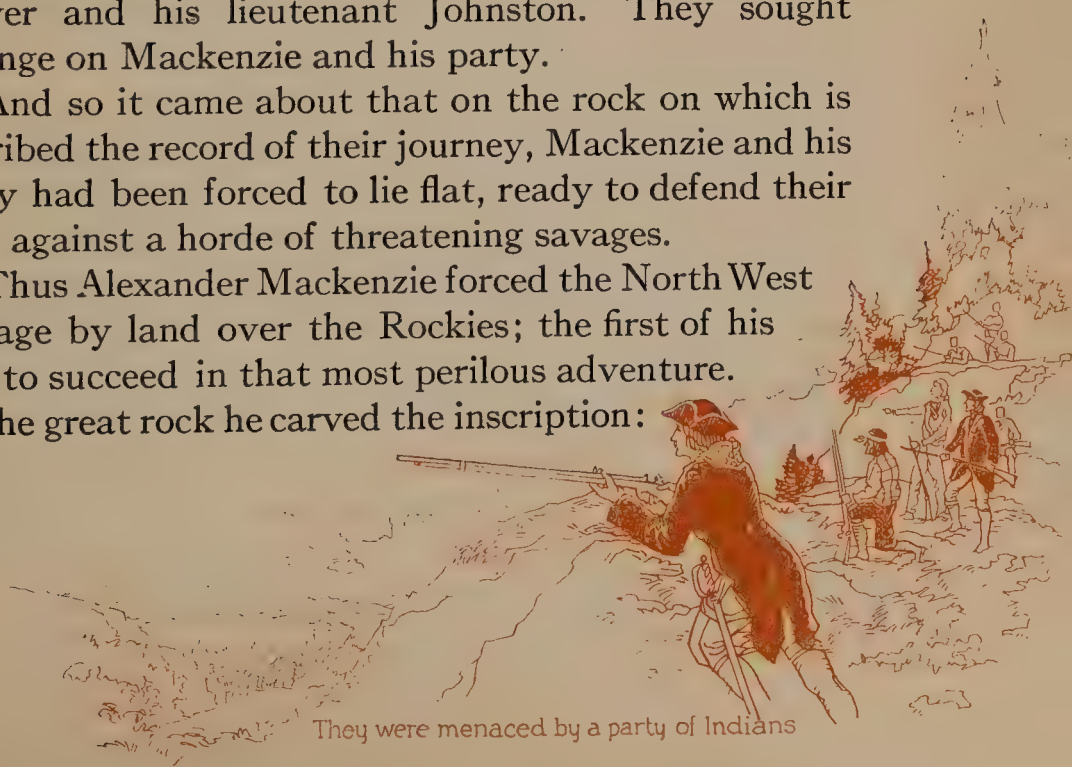
This stage of the journey was at last completed after a great deal of suffering. Lack of food forced them to undertake long marches, and, uncertainty as to the temper of the Indian inhabitants, made their long days and restless nights a procession of unhappiness.

They reached another river, the Bella Coola, and, in canoes purchased from the natives, embarked on the last stage of their voyage.

At the very end, the climax of their journey, they were menaced by a party of Indians who complained that they had been assaulted and insulted by Vancouver and his lieutenant Johnston. They sought revenge on Mackenzie and his party.

And so it came about that on the rock on which is inscribed the record of their journey, Mackenzie and his party had been forced to lie flat, ready to defend their lives against a horde of threatening savages.

Thus Alexander Mackenzie forced the North West passage by land over the Rockies; the first of his race to succeed in that most perilous adventure. On the great rock he carved the inscription:



They were menaced by a party of Indians

"Alexander Mackenzie from Canada by land, the twenty-second day of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three. Lat. 52° 20′ 48″ N."

Eventually the explorer was knighted and became Sir Alexander Mackenzie; he left the West, and after a few years of commercial leadership in Eastern Canada, he retired to Scotland, where he lived peacefully for many years.

After Mackenzie, along the Western trail went David Thompson and Simon Fraser.

Thompson was an explorer of great scientific ability. Before crossing the great mountain range he had explored many great rivers and mapped vast tracts of territory. He first crossed the Rockies in 1802, and for several years after made repeated journeys between stations he established on the Pacific coast and the headquarters of his company at Grand Portage.

Simon Fraser was the other explorer who completed the conquest of the mighty Rockies. He was the man of daring; lacking Thompson's science, he accomplished miracles by forcefulness and indomitable courage.

These two men, Thompson and Fraser, travelled the Rockies as an ordinary man travels his home county.

The mighty range, conquered by Mackenzie, was utterly subdued by Thompson and Fraser.

Within ninety years of Mackenzie's perilous voyage, the steel track of a railway stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Right across Canada the metal road was built; and among the architects of that great Road are the men who made the trails and little roads amidst the untrodden wilderness. The pioneers, the frontiersmen and the explorers. Especially the explorers.

John Graves Simcoe



John Graves Simcoe

1752 - 1806

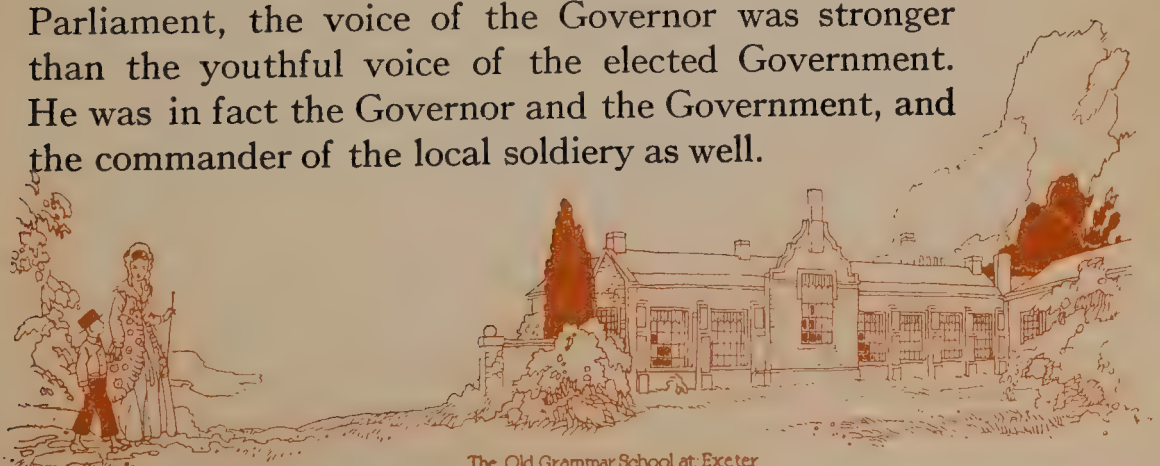
John Graves Simcoe

THE life story of John Graves Simcoe, first Governor of the Province now called Ontario, is the history of a man of ordinary understanding and average ability who achieved distinction, even immortality, by reason of strength of character rather than the accident of genius.

There are no training colleges or special university courses for the production of Governors of Provinces. These representatives of the King are invariably men already distinguished before they are deemed eligible for so great an office.

Nowadays a Governor takes no active part in the practical work of Government. As the officially appointed representative of the King he symbolizes the majesty of a great people; and his office stands as a tangible expression of that sentiment or policy which binds together the people of the scattered lands we call our Empire.

In Simcoe's time the duties of a Governor were of a very different nature. As Governor of Upper Canada he was a practical head of the province. His powers were wide and far reaching. He was a kind of dictator. Though the province was controlled by an elected Parliament, the voice of the Governor was stronger than the youthful voice of the elected Government. He was in fact the Governor and the Government, and the commander of the local soldiery as well.



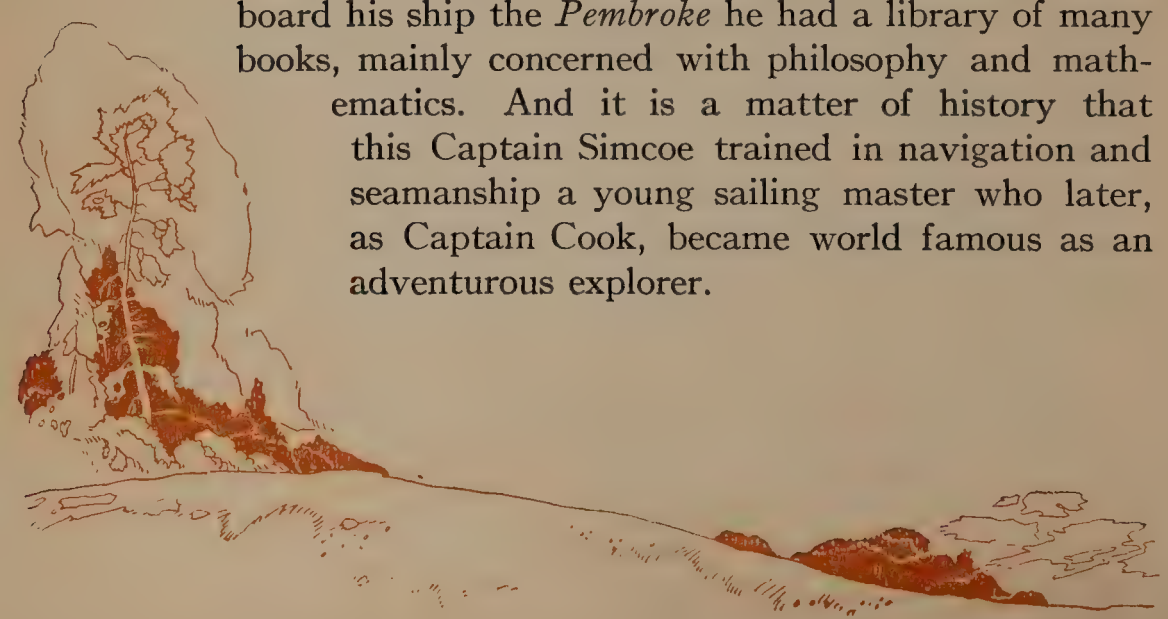
The Old Grammar School at Exeter

It was a tremendous position for any ordinary man; actually it represented a sort of kingship. Simcoe's power was almost that of a despot; he was the Governor of a great district in a wilderness hundreds of miles distant from any authority greater than his own.

What manner of a man was this rather obscure English soldier, selected by the English Crown to undertake this splendid work of Government? Certainly he was the product of an age of great men and tremendous happenings.

It was the period of Revolution in France and in America; during his life-time Trafalgar was fought, and America obtained her freedom. His contemporaries were Pitt and Fox and Burke; Washington, Nelson, Wolfe, Napoleon and a score of others whose great names will remain immortal as long as history lives.

Simcoe was born with no gift of hereditary influence to urge him to power or great achievement. His father, a naval officer, died of pneumonia on board the ship he commanded during the 1759 expedition against Quebec. This Captain Simcoe was a simple, matter of fact man-of-war commander. He was perhaps more studious, more inclined to reading, than the ordinary run of naval men of his period. We are told that on board his ship the *Pembroke* he had a library of many books, mainly concerned with philosophy and mathematics. And it is a matter of history that this Captain Simcoe trained in navigation and seamanship a young sailing master who later, as Captain Cook, became world famous as an adventurous explorer.

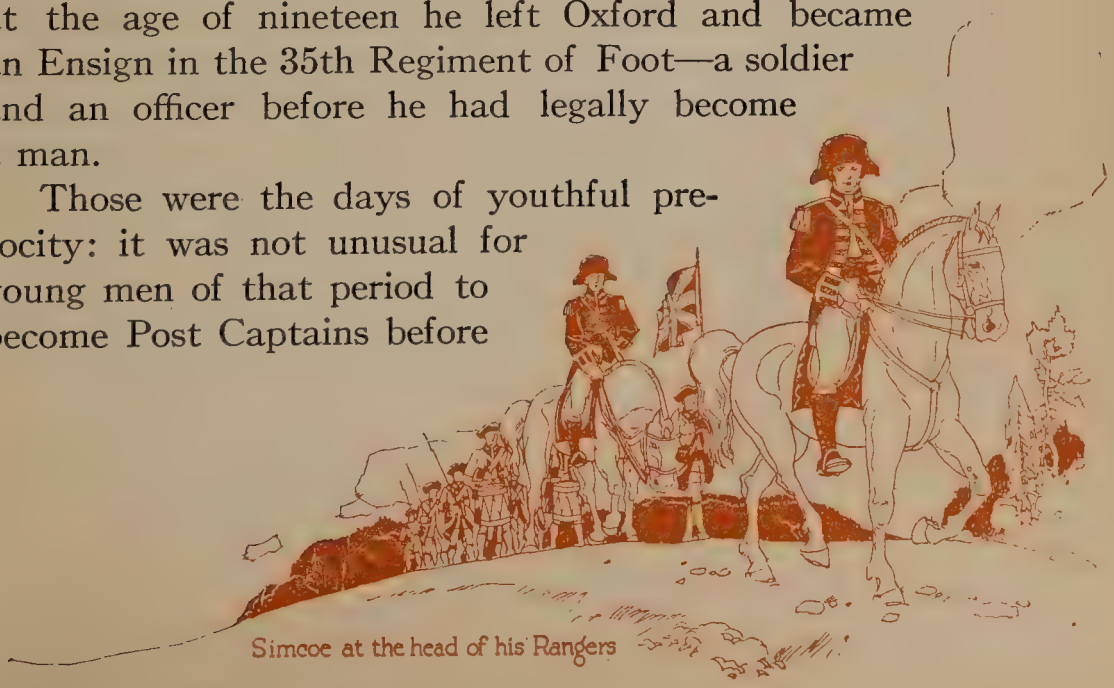


On the death of her husband, the mother of John Graves Simcoe took up her residence in Exeter, the cathedral city of England's Devon. And in that quiet old world centre of culture, the boy was sent to the Free Grammar School.

This Free Grammar School was one of those fine old endowed institutions of England, designed originally for the education of the children of needy people, which had become fashionable with all kinds of parents except those for whom the schools were originally founded. In common with similar English Grammar Schools, and great public schools such as Eton and Winchester, Exeter was a preparatory school for the Universities, used by rich people for their sons. Poor children went elsewhere.

Young Simcoe went from Exeter to Eton, and then on to Merton College, Oxford. His tastes resembled those of his father; he was inclined to be a scholarly lad, keenly interested in ancient and modern literature, and in history. He made a special study of the science of war; during his last year at Oxford he read every tale or history of war, romance or story of battle, he could find. Stories of campaigns, of conquest or defeat, obsessed him. So it is not remarkable that at the age of nineteen he left Oxford and became an Ensign in the 35th Regiment of Foot—a soldier and an officer before he had legally become a man.

Those were the days of youthful precocity: it was not unusual for young men of that period to become Post Captains before

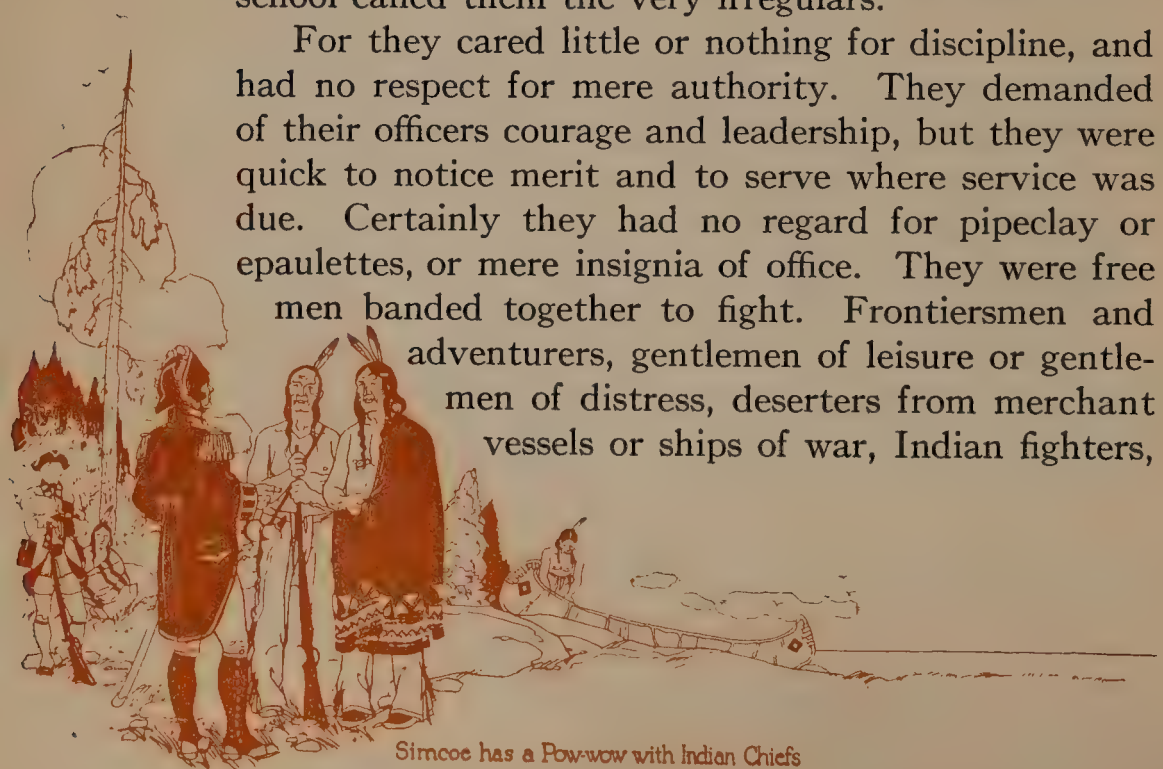


Simcoe at the head of his Rangers

they were twenty-five, or statesmen as soon as they left school. Children of ten joined the navy and became senior officers while still in their teens, and boys became army subalterns instead of going to college. Thus Simcoe would not be counted very young among junior officers when he entered the army at the age of nineteen. But his promotion was rapid, and his was service distinguished. He quickly became Captain and Major, and at twenty-six he was already a Lieutenant-Colonel.

As a soldier Simcoe saw most of his service as a cavalryman, with the Queen's Rangers. From the 21st Foot he transferred to the 40th, and from the 40th he was promoted as Major of the Rangers. Probably it was his service with this famous regiment of irregulars that moulded the character of Simcoe and lifted him above the level of the ordinary military officer. For the Rangers were a body of irregulars as remarkable as they were distinguished. In camp, or on the line of march, they were as difficult to handle as in action they were difficult to check. Soldiers of the stereotyped school called them the very irregulars.

For they cared little or nothing for discipline, and had no respect for mere authority. They demanded of their officers courage and leadership, but they were quick to notice merit and to serve where service was due. Certainly they had no regard for pipeclay or epaulettes, or mere insignia of office. They were free men banded together to fight. Frontiersmen and adventurers, gentlemen of leisure or gentlemen of distress, deserters from merchant vessels or ships of war, Indian fighters,



Simcoe has a Pow-wow with Indian Chiefs

trappers, ex-clerks, mechanics, wharf labourers—as strange a collection of rogues and wild men and heroes as ever marched in semblance of order, or rode knee to knee in one command.

A printed sheet calling for recruits to this band is still extant. According to the placard the terms offered were by no means ungenerous:—

ALL ASPIRING HEROES

HAVE NOW AN OPPORTUNITY OF DISTINGUISHING THEMSELVES BY JOINING

THE QUEEN'S RANGERS HUSSARS

COMMANDED BY

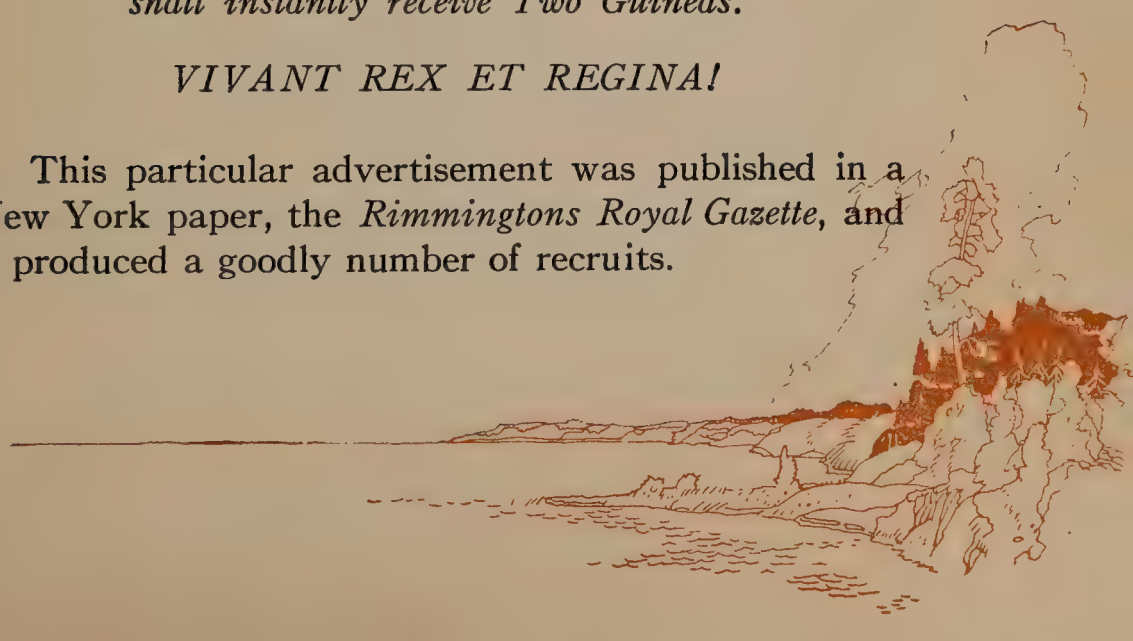
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SIMCOE

Any spirited young man will receive every encouragement, be immediately mounted on an elegant horse, and furnished with clothing, accoutrements, etc., to the amount of FORTY GUINEAS, by applying to Cornet Spencer, at his quarters, No. 1033 Water Street, or his rendezvous, Hewitt's Tavern, near the Coffee House, and the depot at Brandywine, on Golden Hill.

Whoever brings a Recruit
shall instantly receive Two Guineas.

VIVANT REX ET REGINA!

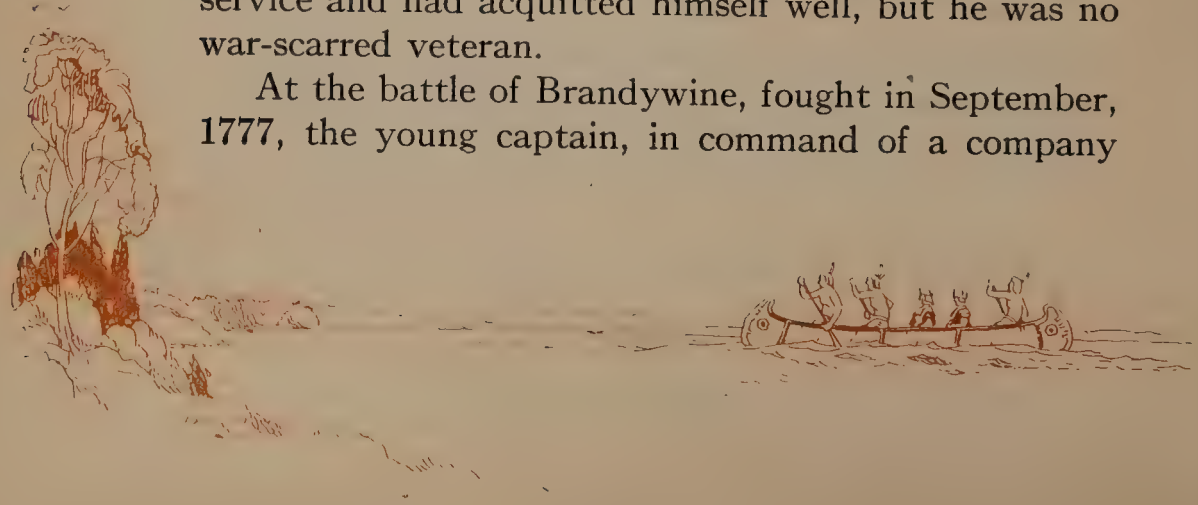
This particular advertisement was published in a New York paper, the *Rimmingtons Royal Gazette*, and it produced a goodly number of recruits.



A peculiar privilege of the Queen's Rangers was that they were always directly and exclusively at the command of their commanding officer. They were supposed to be ready at any moment to undertake any movement or action, to be able to travel vast distances without elaborate preparations, and to attack anywhere and anything at instant command. In fact they were a dare-devil band, and counted as such. And their commander-in-chief possessed peculiar rights which made his regiment virtually an independent command. If he sought permission to undertake a certain mission, or to make a certain attack, the superior authority of whom that permission was asked automatically sanctioned the business without hesitation or reserve. A very wonderful position for a leader to be in, though it carried with it onerous conditions. Conditions which demanded supreme efficiency and reckless bravery; and indifference to death—in fact an absolute adoption of that tremendous command "victory or death." Failure in effort or in action could not be countenanced by the Queen's Rangers, or their usefulness as mobile irregulars would have vanished. The only disaster that could be permitted to overtake them would be obliteration. They must never fail—and remain alive.

It was this magnificent and extraordinary Regiment that attracted the eye and fired the imagination of young Simcoe, a twenty-four year old captain of regular infantry. The youngster had already seen service and had acquitted himself well, but he was no war-scarred veteran.

At the battle of Brandywine, fought in September, 1777, the young captain, in command of a company



of the 40th Foot, had distinguished himself and attracted the notice of the commanding officer, Sir William Howe. The Queen's Rangers had lost many officers and men in a series of hard fought actions, and their strength had been greatly reduced. Volunteers from the regular army were called for to fill the decimated ranks, and there existed a shortage of officers.

Armed with his smattering of war experience, and a certain lack of reticence peculiar to those comparatively fresh from Eton and Oxford, John Graves Simcoe applied for command of the Rangers. This ambitious application was strongly supported by Graves, Admiral of the Fleet then in American Waters, and godfather of Simcoe.

Sir William Howe was pleased with Simcoe's success at Brandywine, and evidently had a high opinion of his ability. The Rangers had performed miracles of bravery in that action, and Simcoe had shown contempt for danger in leading the attack of the regulars at the head of his company of the 40th. The commander-in-chief favoured the appointment, and John Graves Simcoe was appointed to the command of the Rangers, and shortly afterward given the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

From the date of this appointment to the time Simcoe returned to England, a wounded prisoner of war on parole, the life of the young Colonel consisted of a succession of adventures—of battles and marchings, camps and garrisons, of all the disturbances of war. During this tremendous experience the young soldier acquitted himself well—even nobly. He proved himself skilful



Simcoe Journeying up the St. Lawrence

in strategy and a tactician of merit; an excellent leader and a strong commander. He was a popular officer; popular with his men and properly respected by his superior officers.

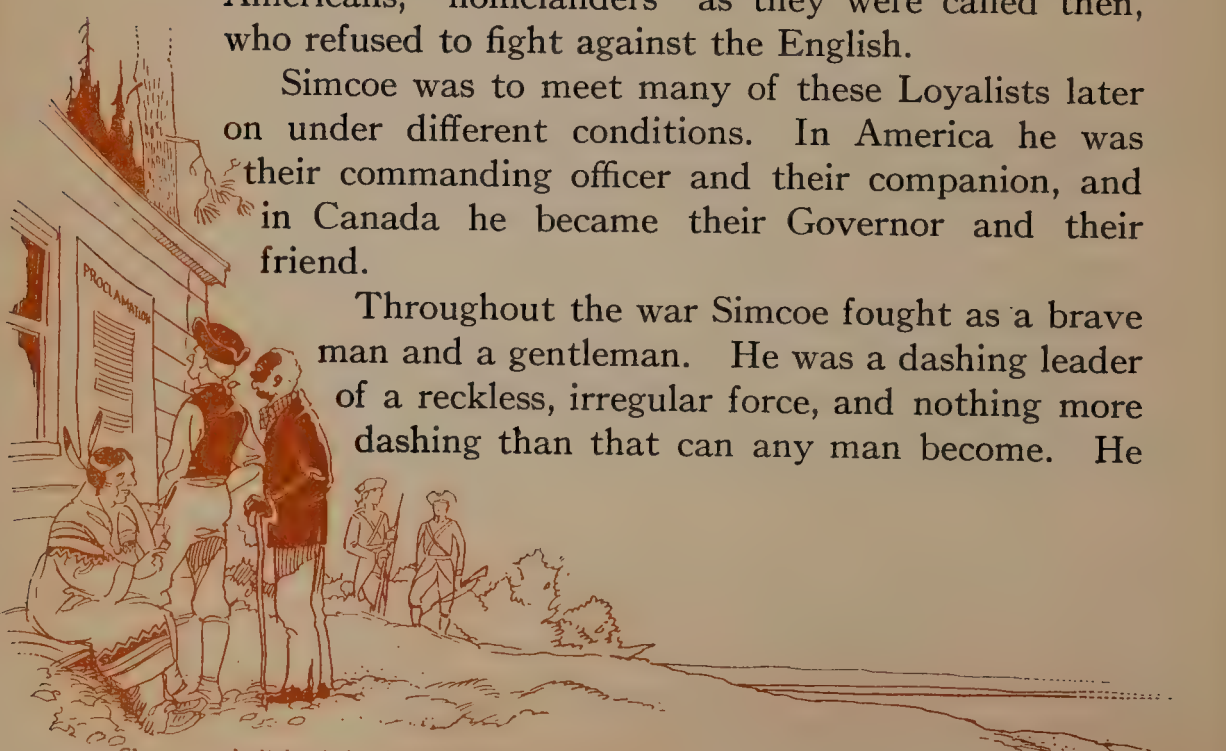
It was Simcoe who introduced the mounted section into his Regiment. Since the Rangers were invariably used as a sort of flying column, constantly on outpost duty, or detailed as scouts, the young colonel speedily discovered the necessity of horsemen. He declined the proffered loan of a troop of Dragoons, contending that their scarlet uniform unfitted them for scouting duties. The Rangers wore tunics of rifleman green. Instead of borrowing regular dragoons Simcoe mounted some of his own men, and recruited others. In time he boasted a troop of sixty cavalry.

After a few months Simcoe embodied in his Regiment a company of Highlanders, and a little later a company of Irish. It was a cosmopolitan battalion, but a wonderful fighting unit.

As casualties occurred—and the casualties were heavy—recruits were found among the bands of loyal Americans, "homelanders" as they were called then, who refused to fight against the English.

Simcoe was to meet many of these Loyalists later on under different conditions. In America he was their commanding officer and their companion, and in Canada he became their Governor and their friend.

Throughout the war Simcoe fought as a brave man and a gentleman. He was a dashing leader of a reckless, irregular force, and nothing more dashing than that can any man become. He



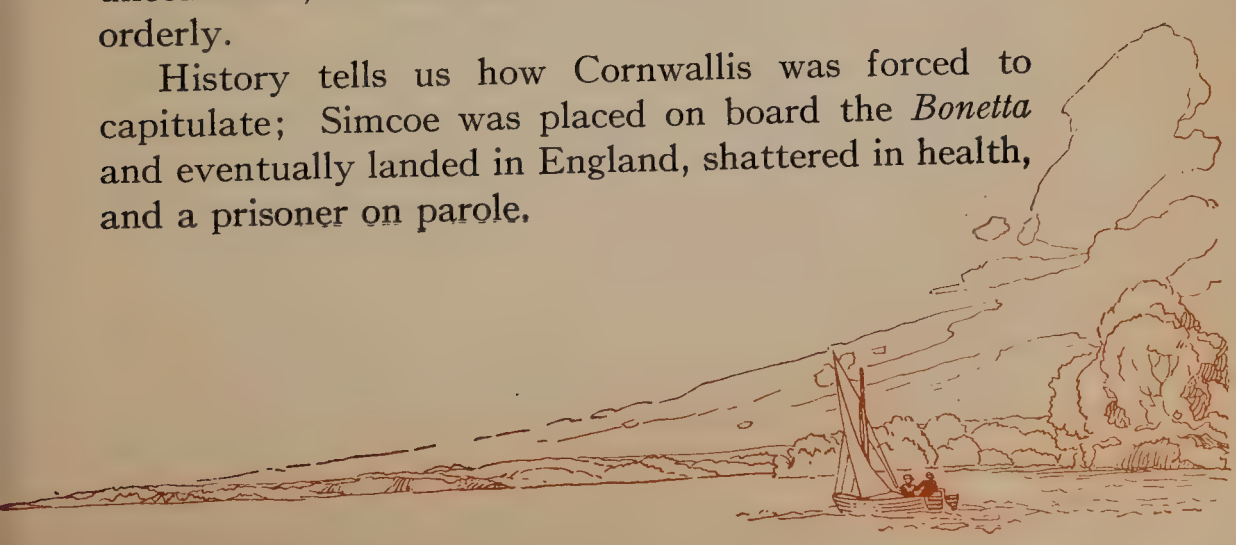
Slavery abolished during Simcoe's governorship

was fearless in action, and tireless in his loyalty to his men and the cause they defended. He was wounded several times, and once or twice he was prostrated by serious sickness. In the end he was captured; but it was by no fault of his own that he was captured alive.

Throughout this sanguinary war which won for America her independence, Simcoe played his part in the manner of a gallant soldier; but it is unnecessary for us to dwell in detail with this phase of his career. His character was to a large extent moulded on the battlefield. He learned leadership by leading men through danger to victory. He gained a knowledge of suffering by watching his comrades die with great honour, but in agony.

The end of the war found Simcoe a prisoner. This was a tragic occurrence, due to tragic circumstances. Shattered in mind and body by frightful fatigue, worn out by battle and incessant marching, he lay on a sick bed at Yorktown; the city was closely invested by the enemy under Washington. Lord Cornwallis, in command of the British, put up a stern resistance, but there was a whisper of defeat. Simcoe, too weak to stand, caused himself to be put on his horse and proceeded to the redoubt occupied by his beloved Rangers. There he remained, a futile yet gallant figure, until, becoming unconscious, he was taken back to his quarters by an orderly.

History tells us how Cornwallis was forced to capitulate; Simcoe was placed on board the *Bonetta* and eventually landed in England, shattered in health, and a prisoner on parole.



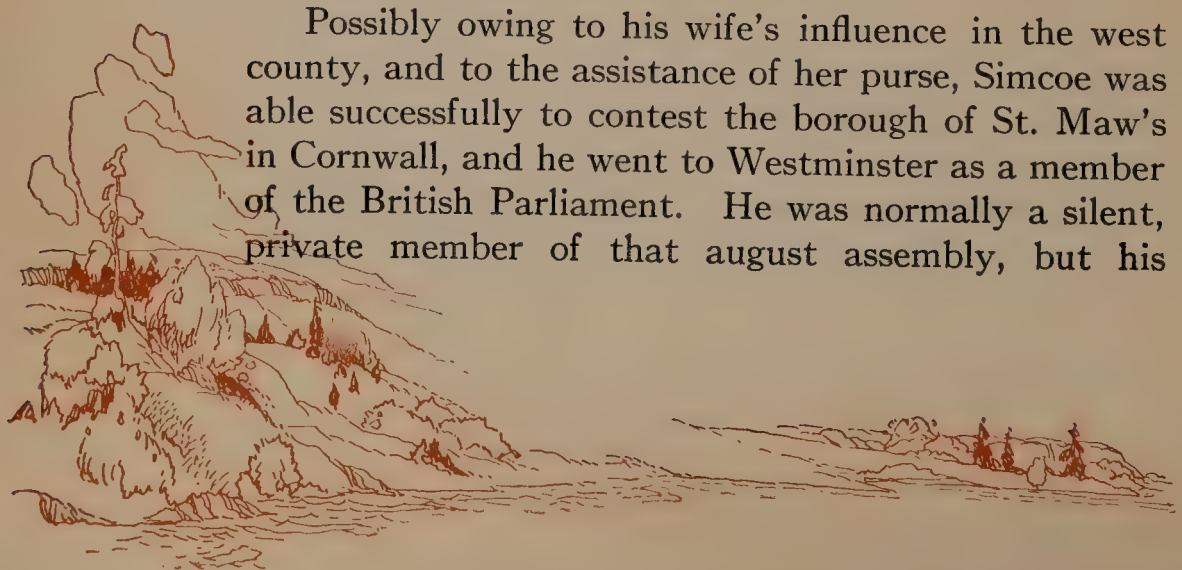
However, the young Colonel was not long in recovering his health, and his liberty was restored by the war office who arranged for his "exchange" with an American prisoner of equal rank. Thus ended the military experiences of Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe in the war of American Independence.

* * * *

Colonel Simcoe settled down to the tranquil life of an English country gentleman. He married Elizabeth Posthuma Gwillen, a great heiress and a beautiful woman. Miss Gwillen, born in Herefordshire of Welsh extraction, was kinswoman to that Admiral Graves who had assisted Simcoe in obtaining command of the Rangers. She was a woman of strong character, gifted with a certain skill in sketching, a sense of humour, and sufficient energy to enable her to become a successful diarist.

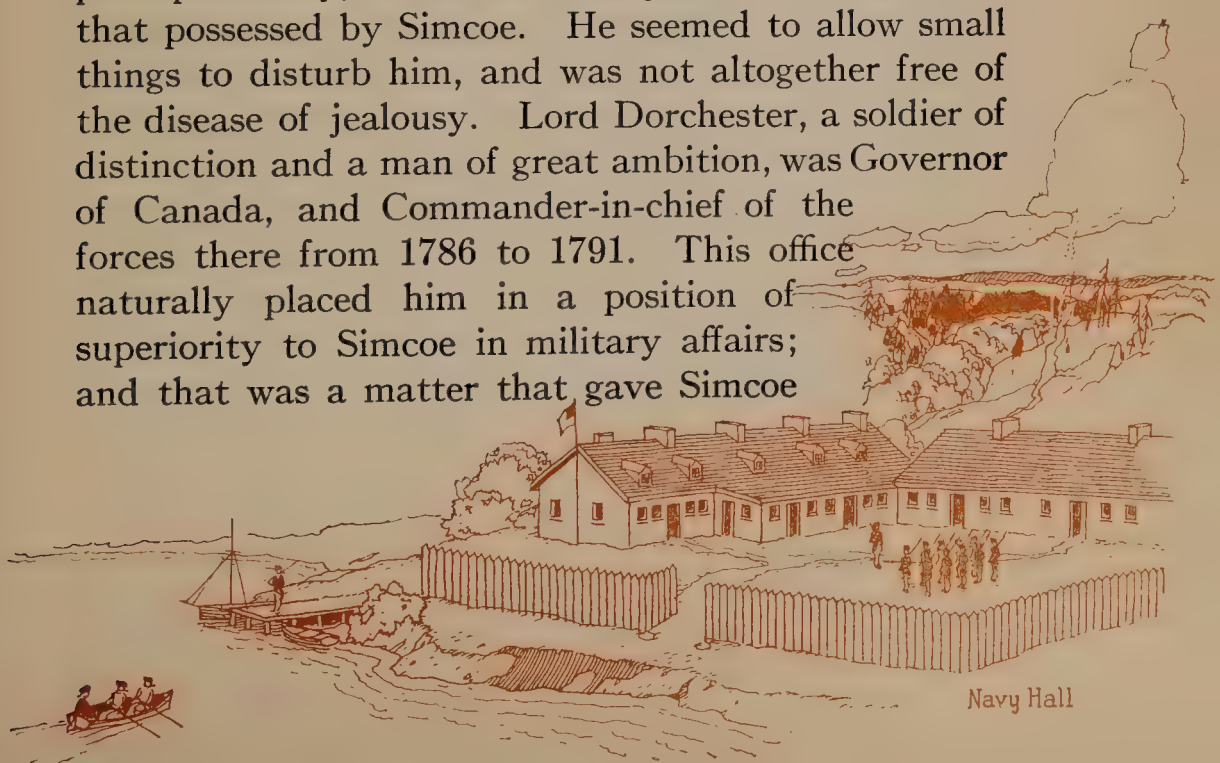
Mrs. Simcoe's diary has been published in Toronto, and it constitutes a book which tells the story of Governor Simcoe's experiences in Upper Canada in a very pleasing and intimate manner. Probably the good lady never imagined that her private records would ever be subject to the fierce light of publicity, but it is of benefit to Ontario that the late John Ross Robertson so successfully effected their publication in permanent form.

Possibly owing to his wife's influence in the west county, and to the assistance of her purse, Simcoe was able successfully to contest the borough of St. Maw's in Cornwall, and he went to Westminster as a member of the British Parliament. He was normally a silent, private member of that august assembly, but his



knowledge of American affairs enabled him to take part in the debates on the Bill by which the Province of Quebec was divided into Upper and Lower Canada. In the course of these debates he naturally became acquainted with the policy held by the Government in the matter of the development of Upper Canada. His speeches were without rhetorical merit; they were those of a simple, sound man possessed of sound ideas. In politics the recklessly brilliant cavalry leader became a steady party man, speaking only when he could speak with knowledge born of experience; and always as a man of substance, a land owner. His contribution to the debate on this Canada Act—"The Constitutional Act of the 31st of the King" as it is called—attracted considerable attention. When the Bill became law, the British Prime Minister offered the Lieutenant-Governorship of Upper Canada to the gallant member for St. Maw's, and so Simcoe came to Canada.

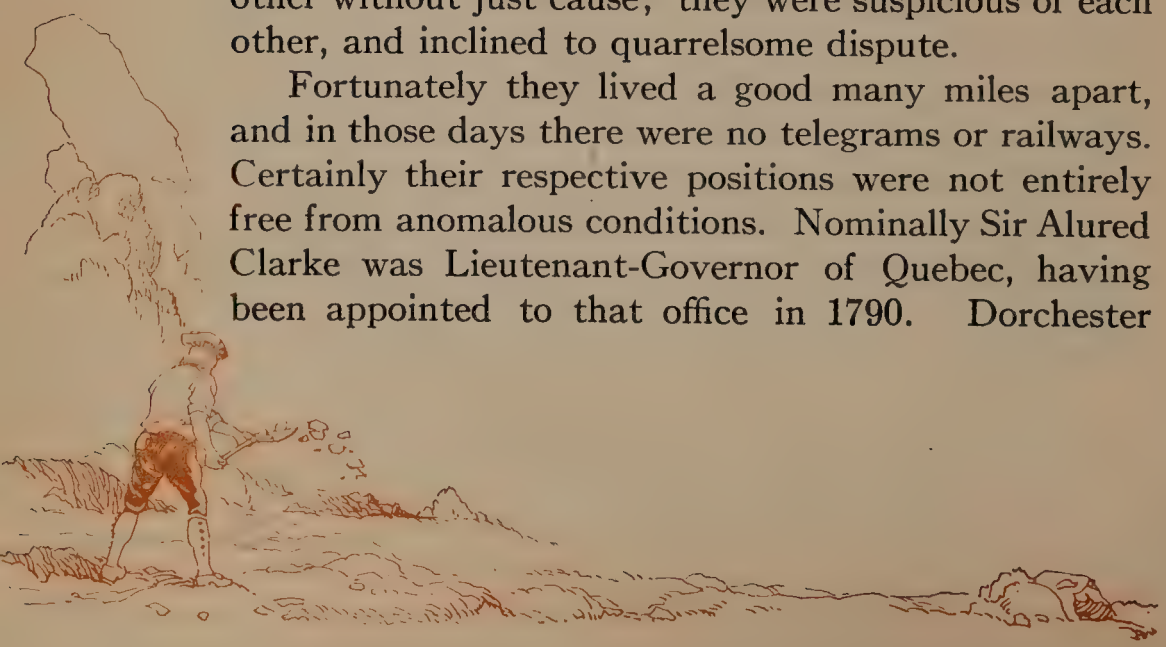
In the beginning small clouds began to appear on the new Lieutenant-Governor's horizon. There is little doubt that many of these difficulties would have been ignored by a greater man, or it would be fairer perhaps to say, a man of a temperament different to that possessed by Simcoe. He seemed to allow small things to disturb him, and was not altogether free of the disease of jealousy. Lord Dorchester, a soldier of distinction and a man of great ambition, was Governor of Canada, and Commander-in-chief of the forces there from 1786 to 1791. This office naturally placed him in a position of superiority to Simcoe in military affairs; and that was a matter that gave Simcoe



Navy Hall

cause for deep resentment. He desired to be supreme in every respect in the new province he had been appointed to govern. He was jealous of Dorchester; and, curiously enough, Dorchester was jealous of Simcoe. The appointment of the ex-Colonel of Rangers as Governor of half the province hitherto absolutely under his own government, was unwelcome to Dorchester. Simcoe had made it clear in London that he must be absolutely free and independent in civil matters, though he was forced to submit to a secondary place in military affairs. Dorchester's idea was that Simcoe should be merely his Lieutenant, and before the Colonel landed in Quebec, the Governor and Commander-in-chief had already taken ship for England to plead for an acknowledgment of his own superiority. He professed to favour the appointment as local Governor of some prominent resident Loyalist already settled in the district; he advocated a confederation of all the Provinces—New Brunswick, Cape Breton Island and so on. Confederation on this scale, however, was not destined to develop for several decades. Dorchester failed to some extent, and he returned to Quebec in no mood of friendship towards his rival in Upper Canada. The two men were like two big boys, angry with each other without just cause; they were suspicious of each other, and inclined to quarrelsome dispute.

Fortunately they lived a good many miles apart, and in those days there were no telegrams or railways. Certainly their respective positions were not entirely free from anomalous conditions. Nominally Sir Alured Clarke was Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, having been appointed to that office in 1790. Dorchester



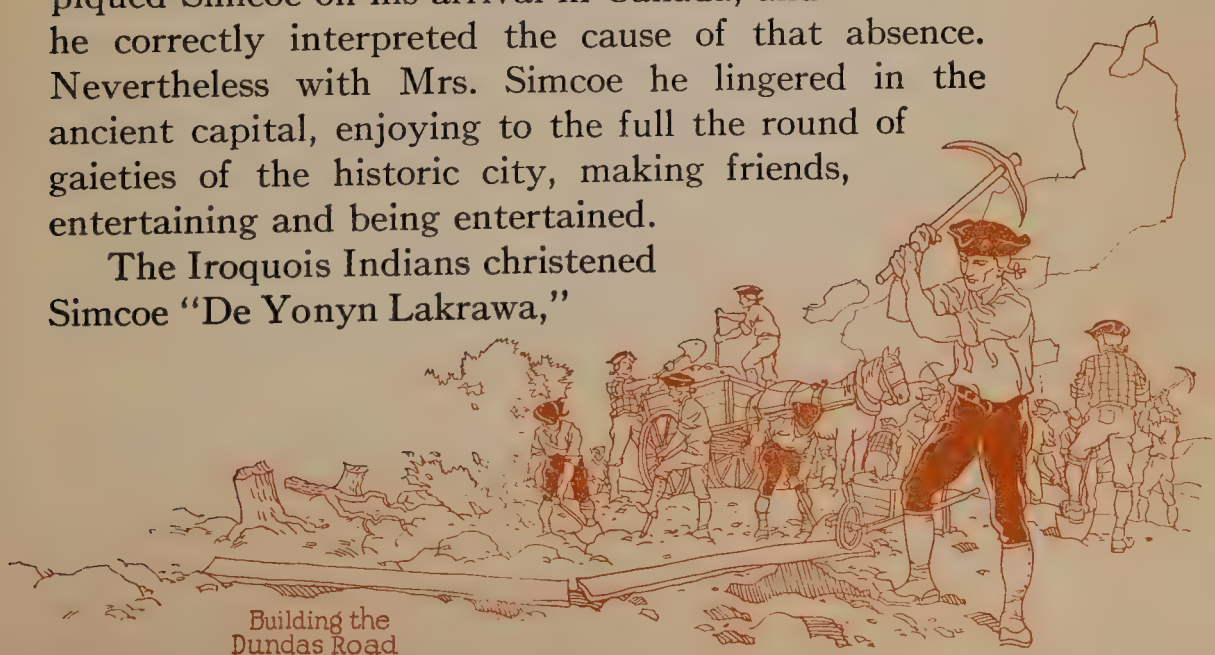
was Governor of Canada, but when he skipped to England to avoid Simcoe, Clarke acted for him. For two years Dorchester was absent, but returned in 1793 as Governor-General. Yet Simcoe had been given a free hand so far as the civil administration of Upper Canada was concerned.

There is little wonder perhaps that between these three soldiers there existed on occasions a certain bitterness. There were too many Governors and Lieutenant-Governors in Canada at that period. Dorchester, after his term of office in Canada, returned to England and comparative obscurity; Sir Alured Clarke became Governor-General of India and eventually a Field Marshal. Simcoe distinguished himself in Upper Canada.

For in spite of his faults John Graves Simcoe was a strong patriot, a fierce Loyalist and a man of the highest integrity, gifted with great common sense. It is rather remarkable that this Englishman, reckless and brilliant as a leader in war, should, as a peaceful administrator, develop a characteristic properly described as the quality of dogged thoroughness. The slow but sure method of the Scotsman or the English yeoman.

Dorchester's absence from Quebec must have piqued Simcoe on his arrival in Canada, and no doubt he correctly interpreted the cause of that absence. Nevertheless with Mrs. Simcoe he lingered in the ancient capital, enjoying to the full the round of gaieties of the historic city, making friends, entertaining and being entertained.

The Iroquois Indians christened Simcoe "De Yonyn Lakrawa,"



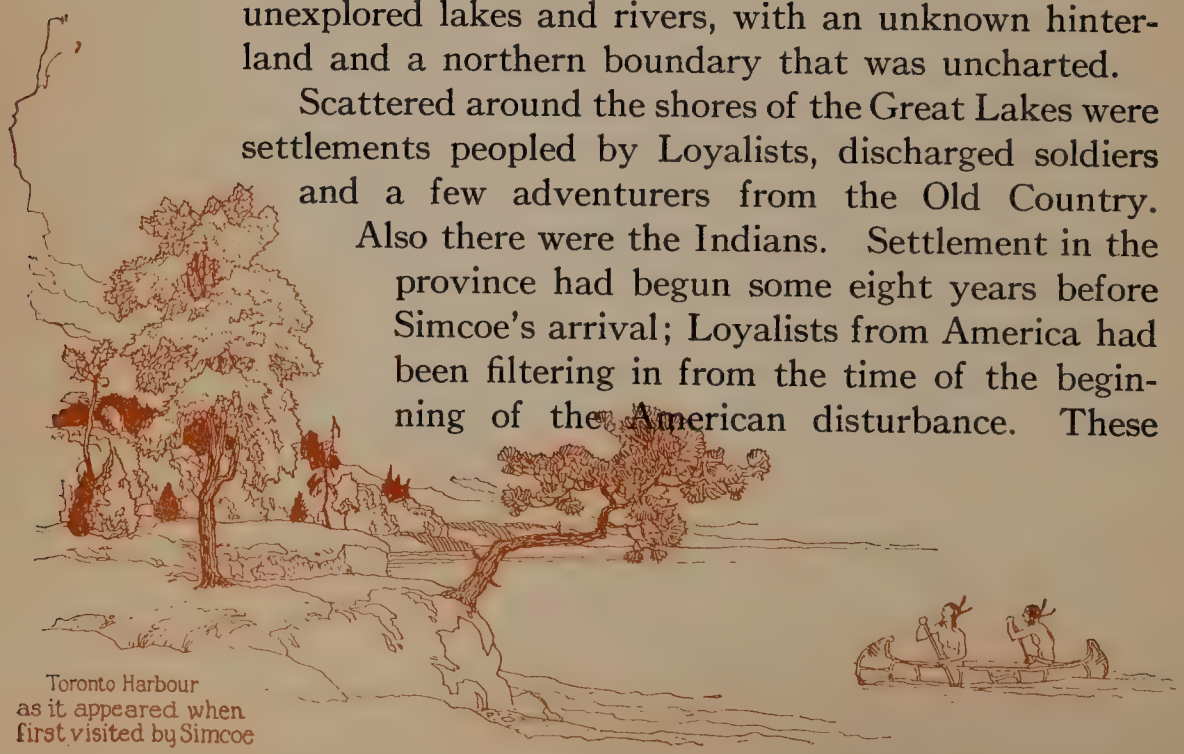
Building the Dundas Road

which means "one whose door is always open." One imagines that Mrs. Simcoe's influence had some bearing on the justification for that christening, though the Colonel was generous enough usually, and he always had a great admiration for the proper Indian.

In June, 1792, the Simcoes with their staff proceeded from Quebec to Upper Canada, arriving at Kingston in July, when the Colonel took the oaths of office in presence of his executive council. The journey up the St. Lawrence River, "this most august of rivers," as Simcoe described it, was made by the party in a fleet of bark canoes. During the journey he was made happy by the arrival of a party of reorganized Queen's Rangers under officers who had served with him during the American War. Thus the Governor was able to enter his new province accompanied by a fitting military escort; an escort composed of troops of a Regiment dear to him beyond all others. Simcoe was in his element—the governor of a province greater than many a Kingdom.

It was a province that was mostly a wilderness. A wilderness of forests and uncultivated lands, of unexplored lakes and rivers, with an unknown hinterland and a northern boundary that was uncharted.

Scattered around the shores of the Great Lakes were settlements peopled by Loyalists, discharged soldiers and a few adventurers from the Old Country. Also there were the Indians. Settlement in the province had begun some eight years before Simcoe's arrival; Loyalists from America had been filtering in from the time of the beginning of the American disturbance. These

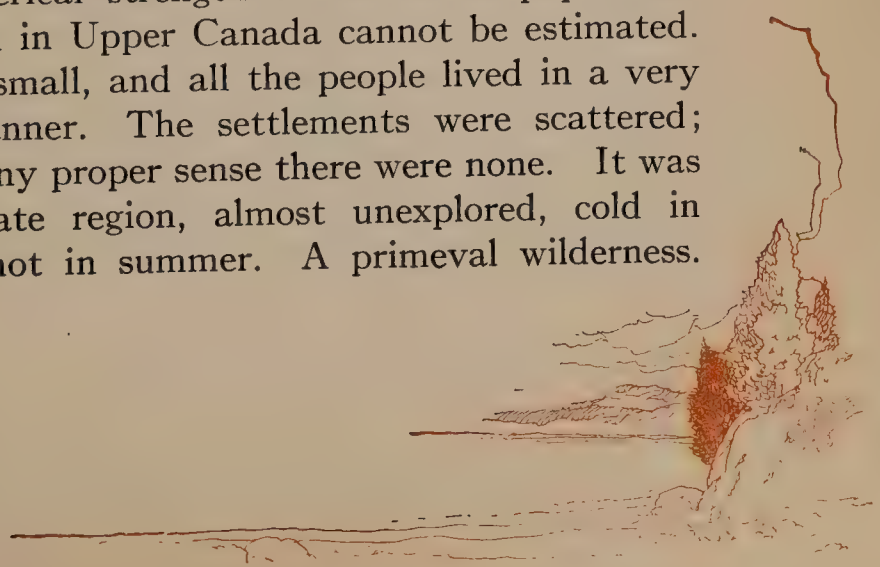


Toronto Harbour as it appeared when first visited by Simcoe

early settlers received generous gifts of land, and settled in communities fortified for safety against attack by Indians, or bands of roaming adventurers from the unsettled districts across the lake. The province since 1784 had been under the jurisdiction of Governor Haldimand, and the legislature of Lower Canada founded by the Quebec Act of 1774. Haldimand had settled the Iroquois Indians, who had fought for Britain, on a great reserve granted to them on the Grand River. Later Simcoe himself gave a similar grant to the Mohawk tribe on the same river. They were a peaceful people, these Indians of Upper Canada, and have never given much trouble or been a serious menace to the white settlers.

This Province of Ontario has reached its present condition of civilization with the aid of singularly little bloodshed. Quebec has been the scene of a multitude of sanguinary engagements, French against British, Americans against Anglo-French, and Indians against white men; but with the exception of a few isolated massacres of priests in the very early days, and one intrusion by American forces, the Province of Ontario has risen to greatness by methods of peace. Her conquests have been made by husbandmen and miners, traders and men of industry, and not by men of war.

The numerical strength of the white population Simcoe found in Upper Canada cannot be estimated. It was very small, and all the people lived in a very primitive manner. The settlements were scattered; of towns in any proper sense there were none. It was just a desolate region, almost unexplored, cold in winter and hot in summer. A primeval wilderness.



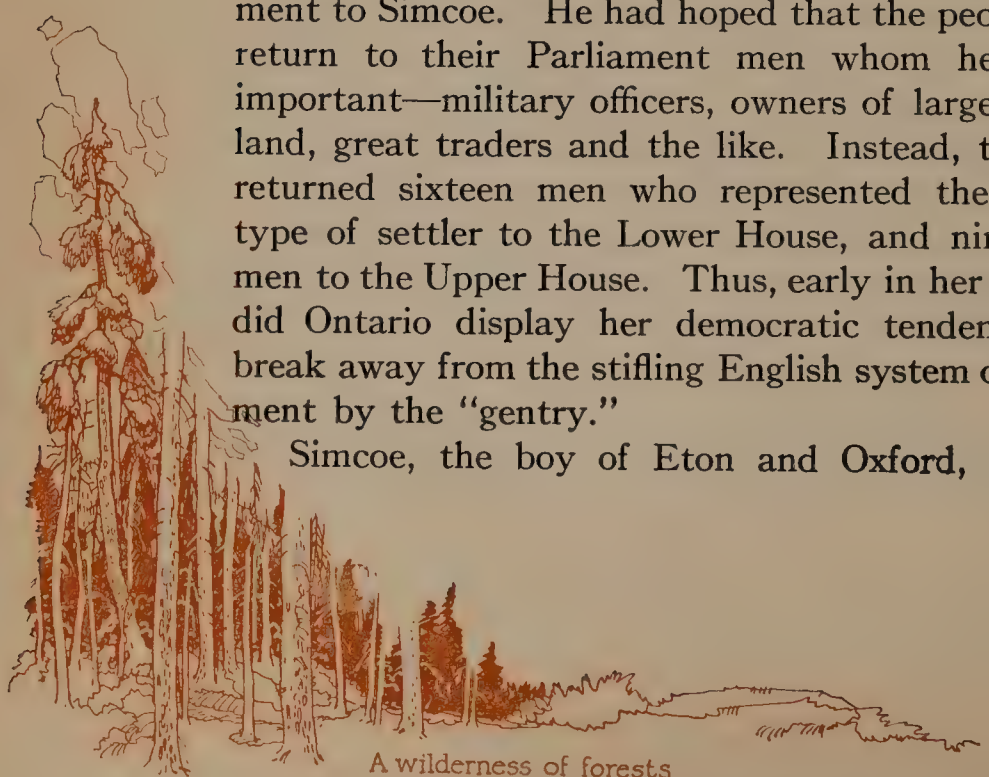
It was Simcoe's mission to produce form and order out of this utter chaos. Thus was the work of the Empire builder thrust into the hand of a man whose main experience had been that of a leader of irregular soldiery.

Truth to tell, it is to be suspected that Simcoe would not have been displeased if he had been forced to cope with some armed opposition. He could not forget his trade, and very frequently he was wont to prophesy that some day the Americans would invade this territory. He was accurate in this prophecy, as history tells us, but the invasion did not occur in his day.

By September of 1792 an election had already been held, and the Village of Newark, at the mouth of the Niagara River, was busy with preparation for the opening of the first Parliament of Upper Canada. It had already been explained to the inhabitants that the old French law of Quebec was no longer to obtain in Upper Canada, and that a parliament was to be elected to enact new laws for the new province.

The result of the elections had been a disappointment to Simcoe. He had hoped that the people would return to their Parliament men whom he counted important—military officers, owners of large tracts of land, great traders and the like. Instead, the people returned sixteen men who represented the ordinary type of settler to the Lower House, and nine similar men to the Upper House. Thus, early in her existence, did Ontario display her democratic tendencies, and break away from the stifling English system of government by the "gentry."

Simcoe, the boy of Eton and Oxford, the great

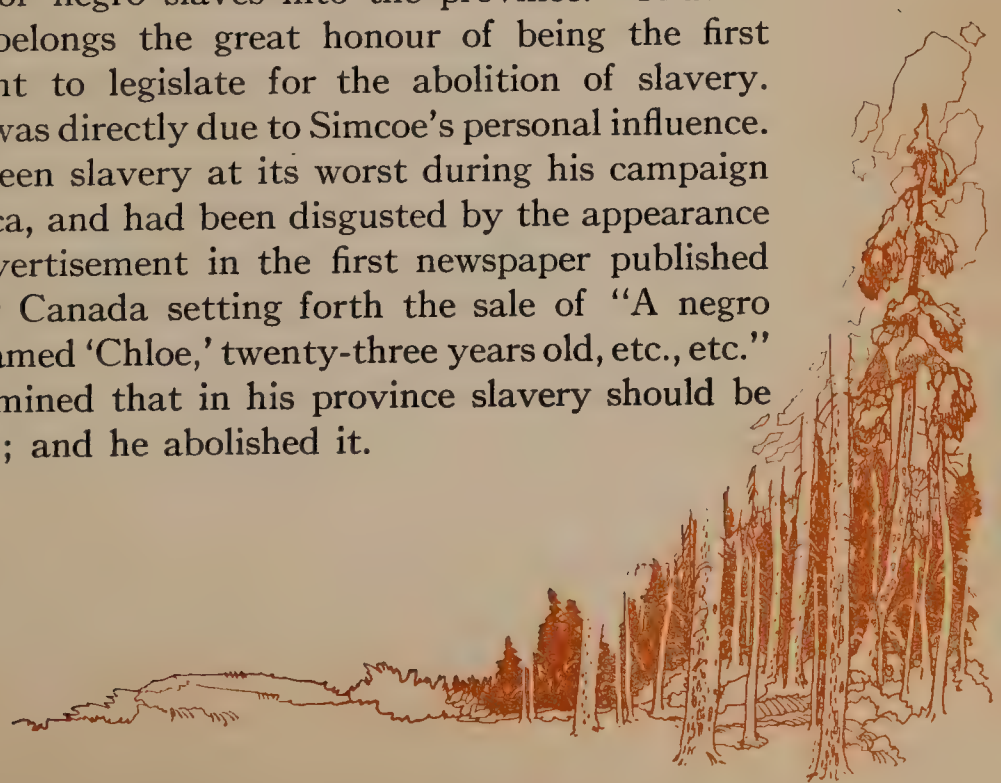


A wilderness of forests

landlord of England, found it difficult to assimilate this system of new democracy. But he was statesman enough to swallow his personal opinions, and work in accord with the will of the people. As a governor he was always faithful to his Parliament, and as a hostess Mrs. Simcoe was always as happily at home with a labourer M.P. as she was with a Major of Hussars.

Newark was the first seat of government, and the new Parliament was opened in great state by Simcoe. Cannons roared in salute as the Governor strode to the little wooden structure which was the first Parliament Building; he wore his full uniform, and was accompanied by red coated guards replete in their elaborate equipment. With great pomp and ceremony he made his first speech from the Throne. His audience, among whom were a great number of Indians, were properly impressed.

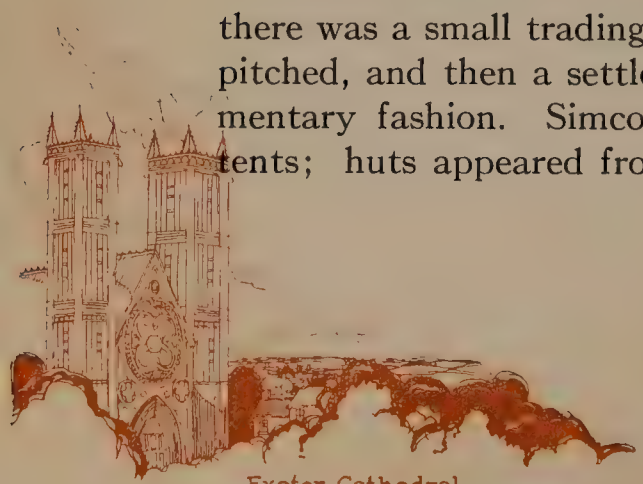
One of the first bills passed by the Upper Canada Parliament brought into operation the whole body of English law. Another early measure prohibited the bringing of negro slaves into the province. Thus to Ontario belongs the great honour of being the first Parliament to legislate for the abolition of slavery. This bill was directly due to Simcoe's personal influence. He had seen slavery at its worst during his campaign in America, and had been disgusted by the appearance of an advertisement in the first newspaper published in Upper Canada setting forth the sale of "A negro wench, named 'Chloe,' twenty-three years old, etc., etc." He determined that in his province slavery should be abolished; and he abolished it.



After opening his Parliament, Simcoe turned his attention to the building of roads throughout the province. Expansion and settlement could only result from improved systems of transport. First he started the building of the great Dundas Highway—a road which he designed to stretch from the shore of Lake Ontario westward to the Detroit River. This road was constructed with great rapidity; the first twenty miles being finished within a period of thirty days. Next he constructed the road we now call Yonge Street, stretching from Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe. Meanwhile he had discovered the site on which Toronto now stands, and had determined that there he would build his capital.

It was only after much exploration that the space of land between the Rivers Don and Humber was finally selected by Simcoe for the site of his capital. For many months he favoured the site where London now stands, a place he counted of greater strategic value than that offered by Toronto. However, the value of the natural harbour, and the general salubrity of the district, finally gained for Toronto the preference; and Simcoe pitched three tents on the shore of the lake at a place near the old fort, and started to construct the city which later he christened York.

The process of the building of the great City of Toronto must have been a fascinating business. First there was a small trading post, the three tents Simcoe pitched, and then a settlement gathered form in fragmentary fashion. Simcoe and his staff lived in the tents; huts appeared from nowhere, houses emerged,



Exeter Cathedral

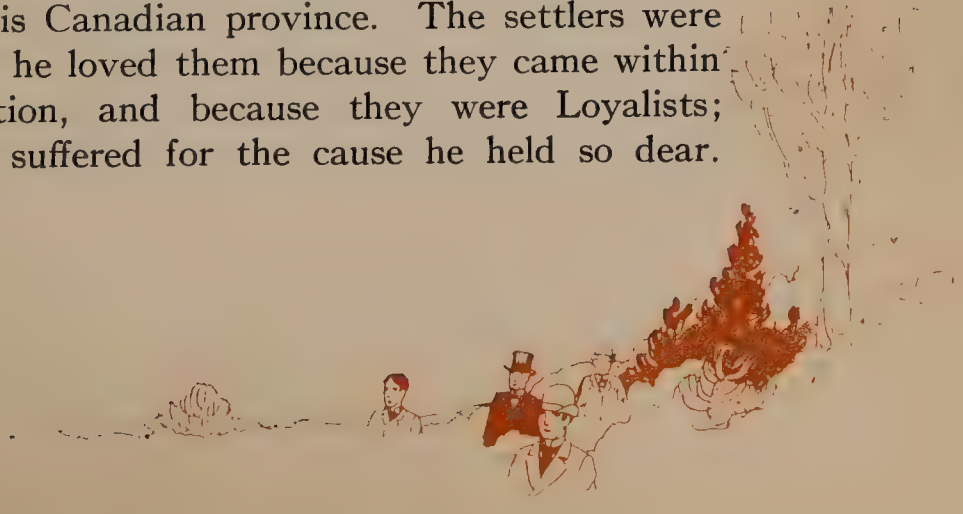
plank buildings, brick stores, a church, a court house, streets, sidewalks—a town was born.

It is a story long and splendid, of rough, wood paved sidewalks, and roadways awash with mud; of men in ill-fashioned clothing, strong, hard-bitten, rather uncouth men; and of women, bare armed, clear-eyed, rough skinned and magnificent.

Taverns crept into being and soldiers arrived; meeting houses were built and filled by stern-faced men who preached a stern religion. In the market place trade for the most part was conducted by methods of barter; and for some time the dwelling houses were mere rude habitations constructed of rough, axed tree trunks, roofed with leafy branches or tarred canvas.

That was the beginning of Toronto; those were the foundations fashioned by Simcoe. He never saw the great University buildings, the City Hall or the sky-scrapers of the downtown districts. His pride of building found adequate expression in a wooden house called Castle Frank, which he caused to be erected on the River Don.

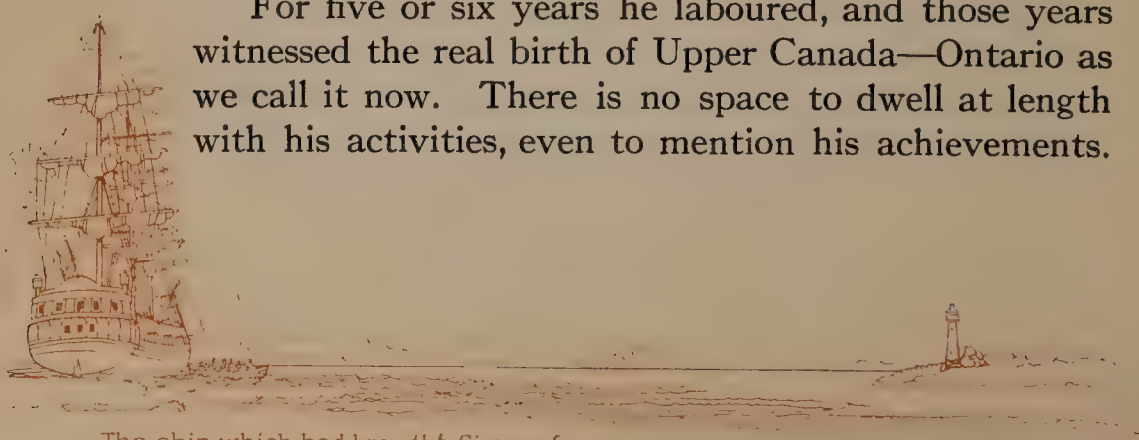
When this City of York was well under the process of construction, Simcoe began to explore his vast province in a systematic manner. He treated it as though it were a great domain in England of which he happened to be the proprietor. The settlers were his own people; no squire in the old country ever cared for his tenants with greater solicitude than did Governor Simcoe in his Canadian province. The settlers were his friends; he loved them because they came within his jurisdiction, and because they were Loyalists; people who suffered for the cause he held so dear.



Truth to tell, probably the honest Governor was not a little humbugged by rather unscrupulous immigrants in regard to this "loyalist" business. Not all the people who accepted grants of land and swore allegiance to His Majesty, were really as loyal as they professed to be. Simcoe, however, was too much the fine gentleman to suspect dishonesty, or to entrap a liar. In his eyes all were good men who came to him openly and asked for land. In the end not much harm was done . . . a few of the worst humbugs proved a little troublesome later on with their anti-British agitations, but on the whole very little mischief resulted.

Simcoe explored his territory with consistent energy; he made journeys by land and water, penetrating the north and west towards districts practically unknown. He founded little settlements, constructed forts, improved the main roads, and laid the foundations of new developments. He visited the settlers and he helped them. Helped them with grants of food, and seed and implements. He helped them through Parliament, and on his own initiative. He studied the country and the conditions and the people, and he put the knowledge he gained to the greatest purpose. The reckless soldier became a steady governor, a master of the arts of peace. So much did he care for the higher things, for religion and all that religion stands for, that he gave a large portion of his official salary for the establishment of an Anglican Bishop of Upper Canada.

For five or six years he laboured, and those years witnessed the real birth of Upper Canada—Ontario as we call it now. There is no space to dwell at length with his activities, even to mention his achievements.



The ship which had brought Simcoe from England took him back home again

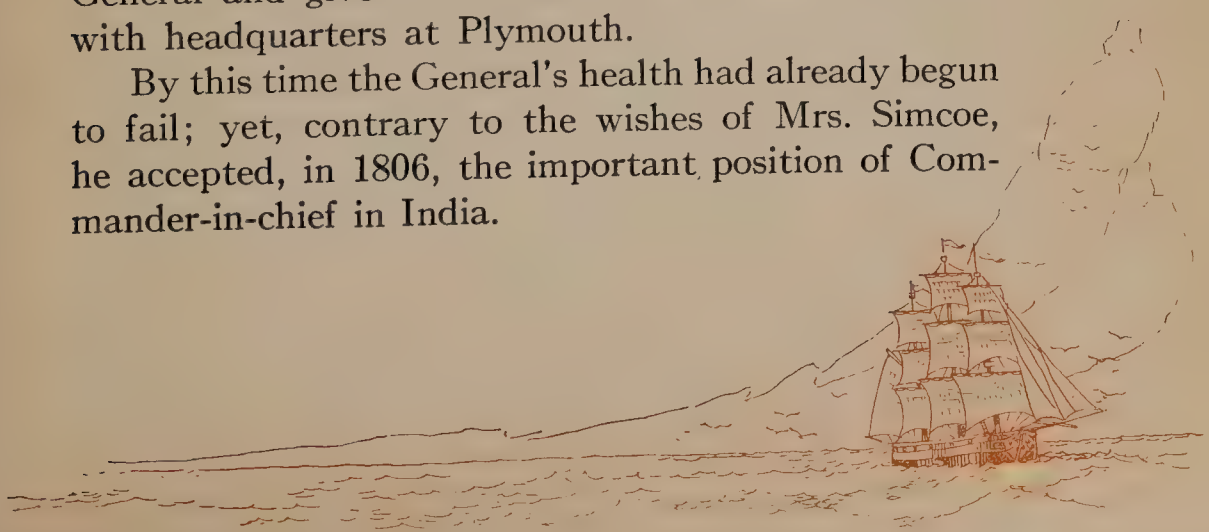
Enough for us to record that Simcoe proved himself a great man, and a great Governor. He laid the foundation of a mighty province, and created a capital city; he conquered a wilderness and constructed roads through primeval forests. Where he had found huts he left settlements; and he filled a vast and silent emptiness with the pleasant noise of an industrious people.

In the year 1796 Simcoe returned to England. He was promoted to the rank of Major-General, and later given partial command of the British troops investing San Domingo.

The work accomplished by the ex-Governor in the unsettled country called San Domingo redounded to his personal credit, but it was a miserable business so far as the British nation was concerned. The force sent from England was insufficient, and we learn that "Wearied with the kind of warfare in which he was thus unavailingly engaged, General Simcoe returned to England in August (1797) to procure a force sufficient to pursue a career of glory, or to abandon a scene furnishing at best but negative honours."

The Home Government were far too busy with more important affairs to permit them to take much account of the remote and mysterious island of San Domingo. Simcoe did not return to the West Indies; instead he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General and given command of the Western district, with headquarters at Plymouth.

By this time the General's health had already begun to fail; yet, contrary to the wishes of Mrs. Simcoe, he accepted, in 1806, the important position of Commander-in-chief in India.



The gallant ex-Governor was destined never to reach India. Before proceeding east he was ordered to join Lords Rosslyn and St. Vincent in a special and very delicate mission in Lisbon. Before he reached Portugal he was stricken with a grievous sickness; the ship which had brought him from England took him back home again. And at Topham in Devonshire, John Graves Simcoe died on the 25th day of October, 1806. He was a gallant gentleman, a great commander, and the founder of the Province we now call Ontario.

Lord Durham



Lord Durham

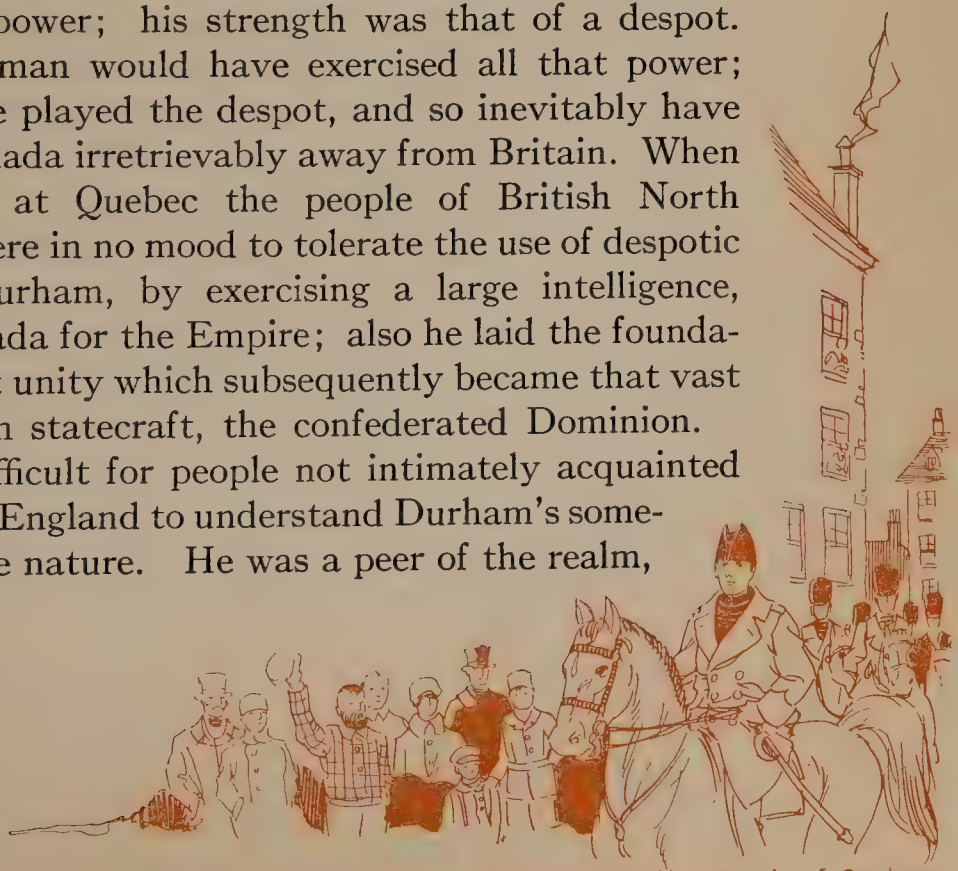
1792 - 1840

Lord Durham

JOHN GEORGE LAMBTON, the Earl of Durham, had undoubted right to the description, "a Great Canadian." He was the first English statesman to recognize and to ventilate the right of Canadians to freedom; the first to destroy the old fetish that Canada was a mere colony, a sort of inferior place that could only be properly governed by the parliament at Westminster.

That fetish, the crown colony fetish, had already brought disaster to the two Canadas. It was the direct cause of the uprisings so badly organized by Papineau and William Lyon Mackenzie. When Durham landed at Quebec in 1838 he came with instructions to control the Canadas and the Maritimes. He was armed with unlimited power; his strength was that of a despot. A smaller man would have exercised all that power; would have played the despot, and so inevitably have turned Canada irretrievably away from Britain. When he landed at Quebec the people of British North America were in no mood to tolerate the use of despotic power. Durham, by exercising a large intelligence, saved Canada for the Empire; also he laid the foundation of that unity which subsequently became that vast structure in statecraft, the confederated Dominion.

It is difficult for people not intimately acquainted with life in England to understand Durham's somewhat subtle nature. He was a peer of the realm,



Mounted on a white charger, Durham paraded the streets of Quebec

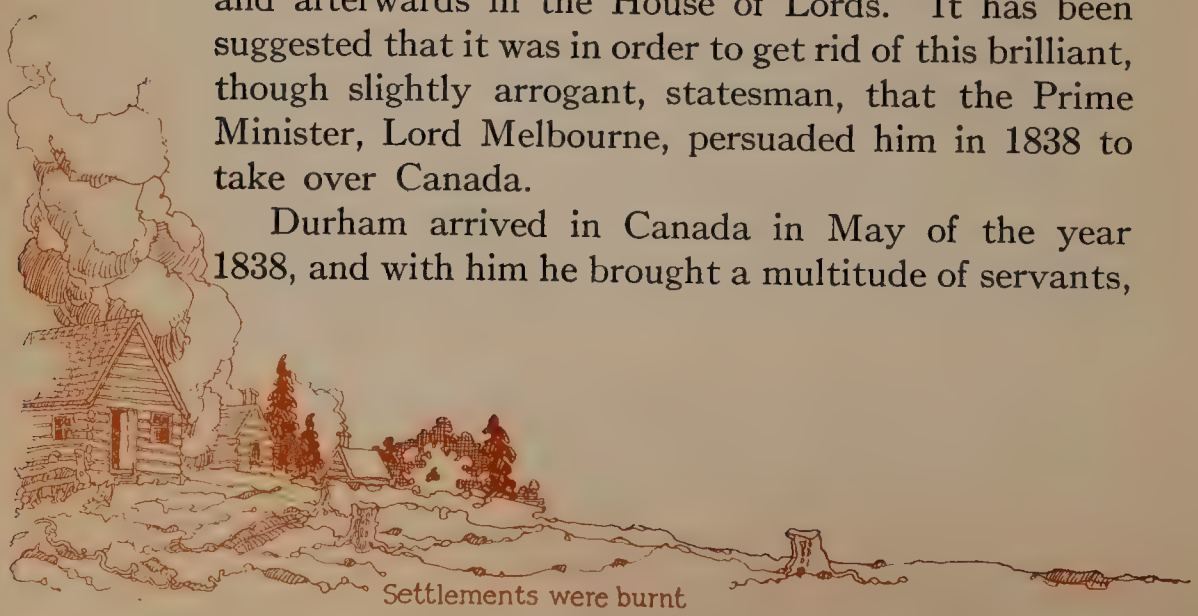
an Earl—a very high rank in the peerage, inferior only to those of Duke and Marquis. When he was given this title in 1826, the peerage generally had not yet been swamped by nonentities, powerful only by reason of wealth.

Before he became Lord Durham, John Lambton was already an aristocrat. He was a member of that old English aristocracy who count themselves above the peerage. His people had held their estates in unbroken succession for more than seven centuries. Probably every one of his ancestors had refused a title —refused it as an unworthy adjunct to the great name they possessed. Many of the really great English families are untitled, and it is probable that Lambton accepted his earldom to please his wife, or his father-in-law, Earl Grey, a British Prime Minister.

Durham was a man of great wealth and of handsome appearance. One can discern in his acceptance of the office of Governor-General of Canada, nothing but an honest attempt to serve his country. Although, of course, the post is one of the highest honour, in his day it was also one of the utmost difficulty—even of danger.

Durham understood this. He had followed politics intimately, first as a member of the British Commons, and afterwards in the House of Lords. It has been suggested that it was in order to get rid of this brilliant, though slightly arrogant, statesman, that the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, persuaded him in 1838 to take over Canada.

Durham arrived in Canada in May of the year 1838, and with him he brought a multitude of servants,



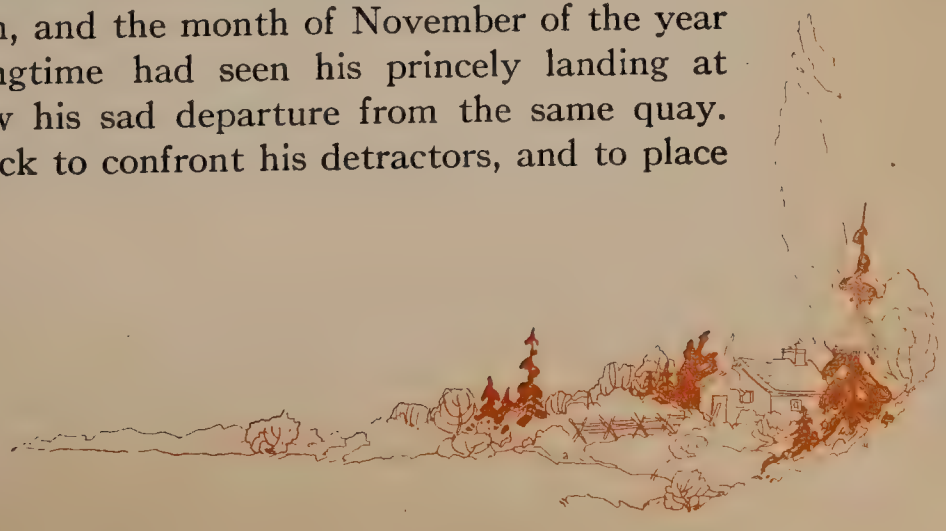
Settlements were burnt

eight secretaries, and a vast quantity of gold and silver plate. He disembarked from his ship, and, mounted on a white charger, paraded the streets of Quebec in the manner of an arrogant prince. Immediately he made the acquaintance of all the leaders in the country. He entertained lavishly, giving great banquets, to which he invited political leaders of all shades of opinion.

The situation in both Upper and Lower Canada was difficult. There had been uprisings, bloodshed—men had been killed and settlements burnt. Gaols were filled with prisoners—rebels; men arrested in armed rebellion against authority. Men for whom the legal penalty was death, and whose lives were demanded, fiercely, by law-abiding citizens who had suffered directly or indirectly at their hands.

Durham decided on a policy of mercy. The law demanded violence—the death of these rebellious plotters. Durham ignored the law; or rather, he created a new law. Instead of hanging these prisoners, he banished them. They were not even tried in a court of justice; they were banished.

In taking this high-handed, illegal method of dealing with a dangerous situation, Durham relied on the support of his friends at Westminster. He thought Melbourne would protect and safeguard him. But he misjudged either his own importance, or the friendship of Lord Melbourne. The English Government condemned him, and the month of November of the year whose springtime had seen his princely landing at Quebec, saw his sad departure from the same quay. He went back to confront his detractors, and to place

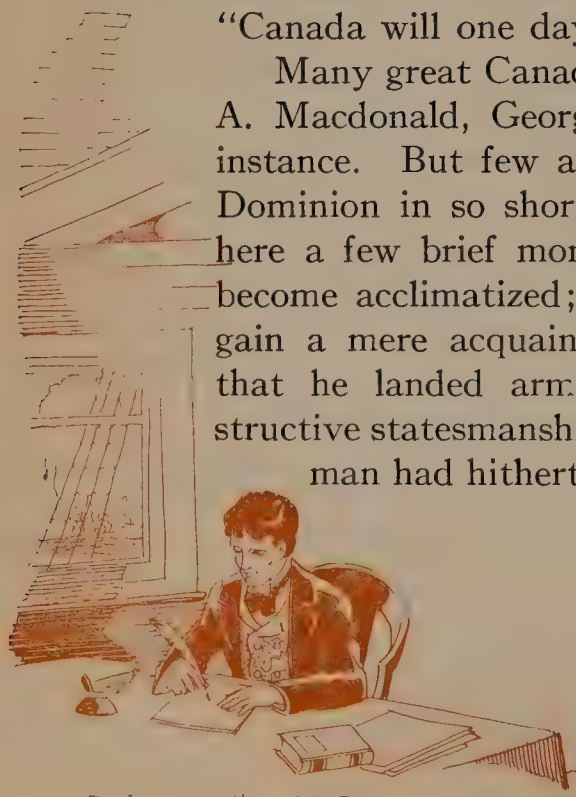


before the authorities of the crown a plan for the improvement of the government of Canada.

Both these things he accomplished, but so great was the strain of his labours that he died. Killed, history says, by his strenuous months in Canada. Death came to him when he was forty-eight years old, and little more than a year after he left Quebec.

He finished his report in the January of 1839. Little more than a year was left him to explain and justify his findings in regard to the government of Canada, but in spite of much official opposition, and the necessity to enlighten a great amount of ignorance in high places—an ignorance born of a total lack of knowledge regarding conditions in British North America—the time was sufficient. He was, during that last year, a very sick man; and he knew that he was hanging on to life by a flimsy thread which constantly threatened to snap, and send him hence, his work unfinished. But he endured it all with heroism which was magnificent as well as pathetic. With the last flicker of life, as the end was upon him, he said: "Canada will one day do justice to my memory."

Many great Canadians were born in Britain—John A. Macdonald, George Brown, Lord Strathcona, for instance. But few achieved so great a work for the Dominion in so short a time as Durham. He lived here a few brief months, not nearly long enough to become acclimatized; or, in a man of smaller gifts, to gain a mere acquaintance of conditions. It is true that he landed armed with opportunities for constructive statesmanship greater perhaps than any other man had hitherto brought to Canada. But also,



Durham writing his Report en route to England

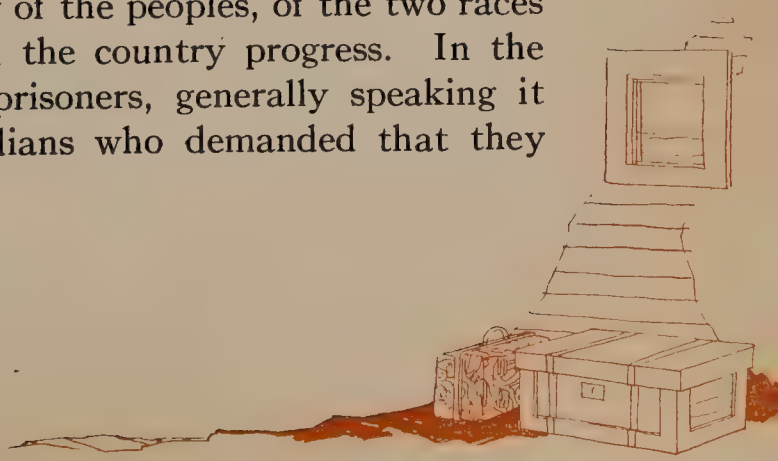
it should be remembered, he arrived at a time of critical danger, a period of racial antagonism, rebellion, and despair.

Because he continued amidst these perils to dine sumptuously—theatrically—off gold and silver plate, attended by a huge retinue of gilded footmen, it does not follow that the old aristocrat, the millionaire Earl, was a mere fop. His ostentatious display was continued, even flaunted, in order to impress a rather sceptical people of the might and culture of Britain. As he dined he also schemed; plotted for the better governance of Canada. His "Report on the Affairs of British North America" was written on the high seas, and in England. But it was formed and fashioned amidst those occasions of ostentation; those displays which to-day would be counted vulgar.

Durham was a man of arrogant temperament. He ruled his menials in the manner of an oldtime Russian Czar. He even tried to rule his wife; but he refused to permit the execution of a single one of those miserable offenders who had been flung into gaol for treason.

In the saving of their lives he, to a large extent, sacrificed his own ambition for power. He was illegally humane. The flamboyant despot ignored the law in order that he might snatch from death a crowd of men who must to him have seemed a mere rabble of political renegades.

But he was a statesman wise enough to discern that only through the unity of the peoples, of the two races of the Canadas, could the country progress. In the case of the political prisoners, generally speaking it was the British-Canadians who demanded that they



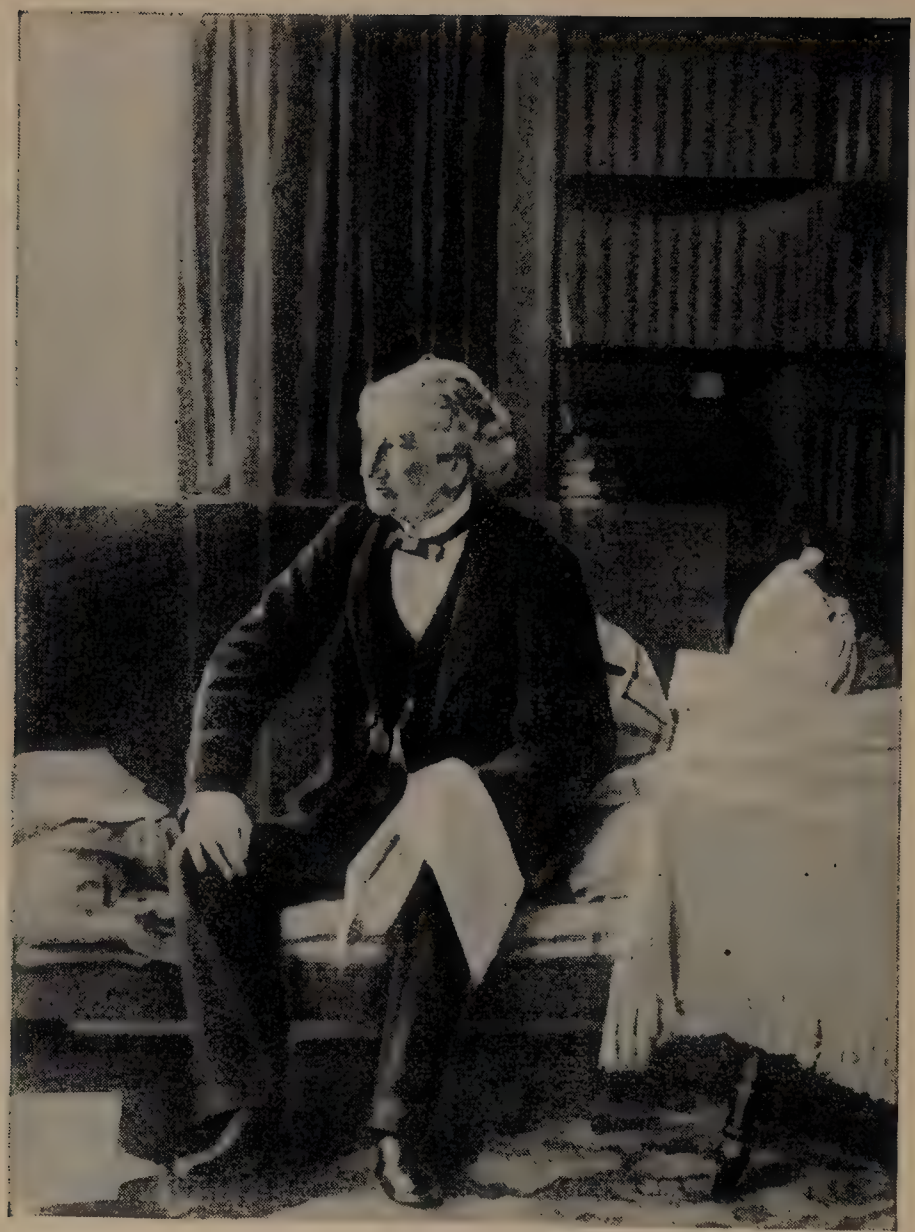
should be executed; the French regarded them as martyrs. All that terrible race antagonism had to be swept away. That was a point emphasized in Durham's epoch-making report.

When he had done his part in the work of Canadian construction, he lived just long enough to see his office in British North America handed to a man whom he had been able to inspire with some of his vision. This man, Charles Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham, was able to effect the political union of the two Canadas and the construction of a cabinet—a cabinet of somewhat restricted power perhaps, but an institution which marked a great advance.

After Sydenham, and two later Governors—Bagot and Metcalf—Lord Elgin, son-in-law of Lord Durham, accepted the office, and he went a long way in the direction indicated by Durham. Lord Elgin insisted on Canada's right to self-government, and, though he was vilely insulted and assaulted by a few of the people he so splendidly served, the Canadas have ever since been self-governing provinces.

So much for Lord Durham. He was a man whom many admired, and a few loved. He was undoubtedly a splendid statesman, and in some ways a good man. Certainly he accomplished, within a year, more than many men had achieved, until then, in centuries. Thus, we count him a Great Canadian.

Sir John A. Macdonald



Jno A Macdonald
May 13 1888

1815 - 1891

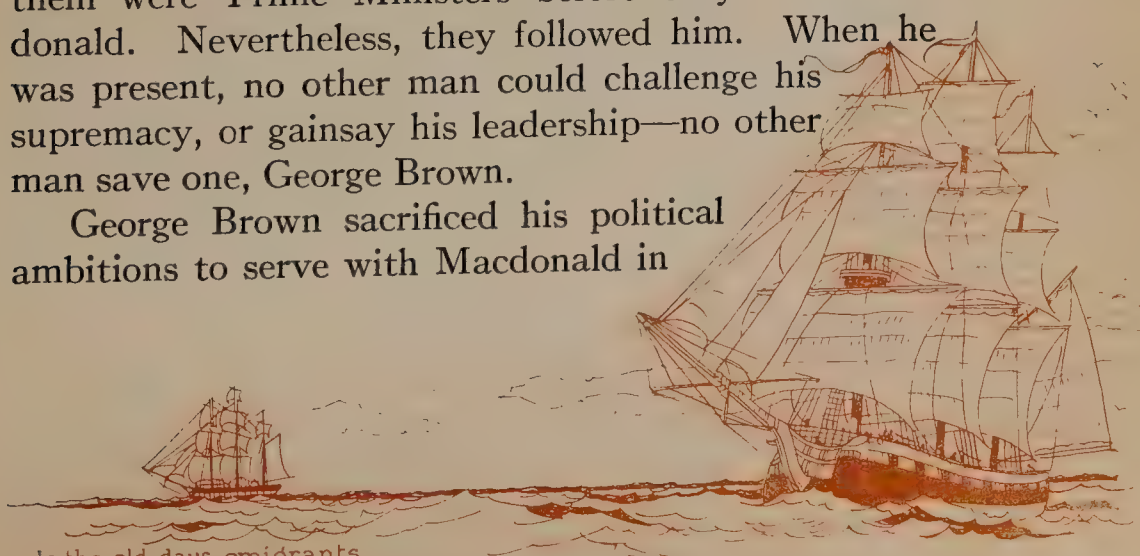
Sir John A. Macdonald

JOHN A. MACDONALD was the most powerful political person ever known in Canada. In a sense he was our greatest statesman; though he was probably always greater as a person than as a statesman. Macdonald shone in history as the exemplification of the infinite power of personality. Though he had courage and wisdom, instinctive honour and a splendid intelligence, most of all he possessed the subtlety and the genius of personality.

He lived in an age of great men. Howe, Cartier, Tilley, George Brown, D'Arcy McGee, Tupper, Galt, and others of the period of Confederation were not men of second rate calibre, they were not politicians of a merely moderate grade, yet John A. Macdonald stood out above and beyond them all. He led them. One and all they regarded him as their proper leader. By reason of affection or intelligence, or because they could not help themselves, these men followed him; and, until he died, he led them.

Each of these men was himself a leader. Many of them were Prime Ministers before they met Macdonald. Nevertheless, they followed him. When he was present, no other man could challenge his supremacy, or gainsay his leadership—no other man save one, George Brown.

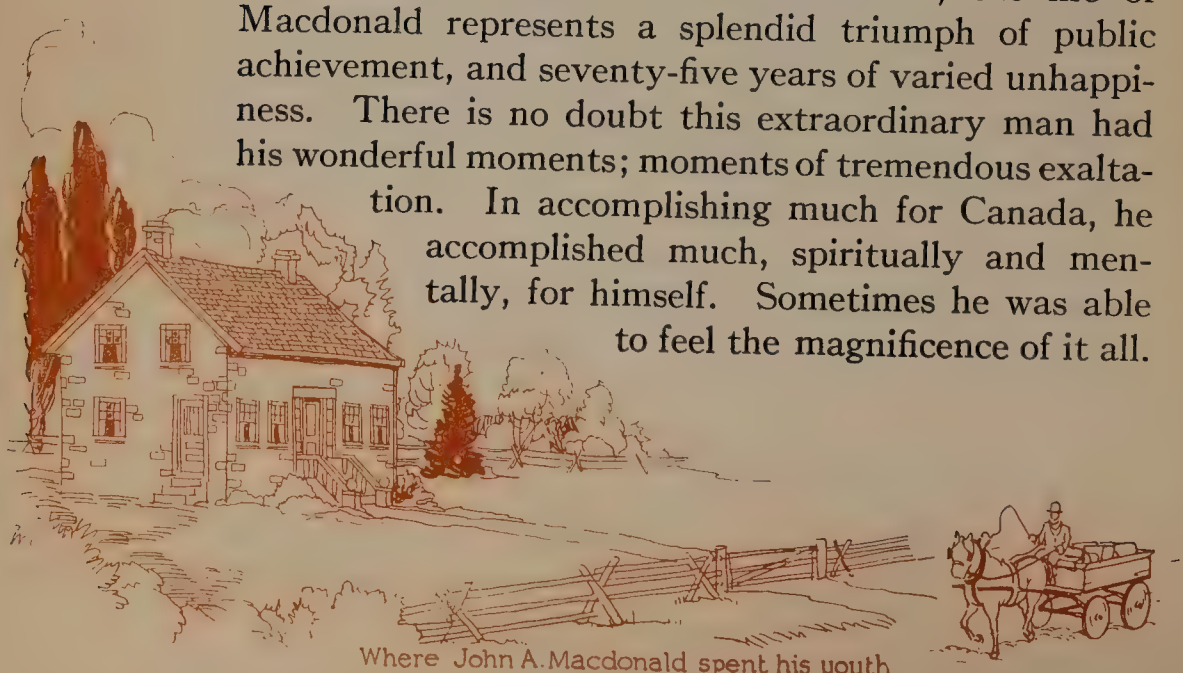
George Brown sacrificed his political ambitions to serve with Macdonald in



In the old days emigrants journeyed in splendid sailing ships

order that Confederation might become an accomplished fact. Probably he loathed Macdonald; loathed and despised him. But for a period he served with, and under, him. For the sake of a great ideal—and that must always be put to George Brown's credit—he served; served under a man he could neither understand nor over-ride. History proves Macdonald to be the greater man, but, so far as Brown could see, or, by exact analysis, judge, George Brown was always the greater person. Brown was a great, big, handsome man; a writer, a purist, a thinker, with a character almost without blemish; he could not understand the power of this Macdonald—though he acknowledged that power. Acknowledged it by his actions, though never by his voice or pen. The power of personality is an incomprehensible force. Brown never comprehended it, and as soon as he felt that with honour he could do so, he disassociated himself from the Macdonald group, and pursued his own public life in his own way, according to his own conscience. A majority of the leaders of Confederation remained steadfastly with Macdonald—acknowledging his leadership and proud of his friendship.

Taking all things into consideration, the life of Macdonald represents a splendid triumph of public achievement, and seventy-five years of varied unhappiness. There is no doubt this extraordinary man had his wonderful moments; moments of tremendous exaltation. In accomplishing much for Canada, he accomplished much, spiritually and mentally, for himself. Sometimes he was able to feel the magnificence of it all.



Where John A. Macdonald spent his youth

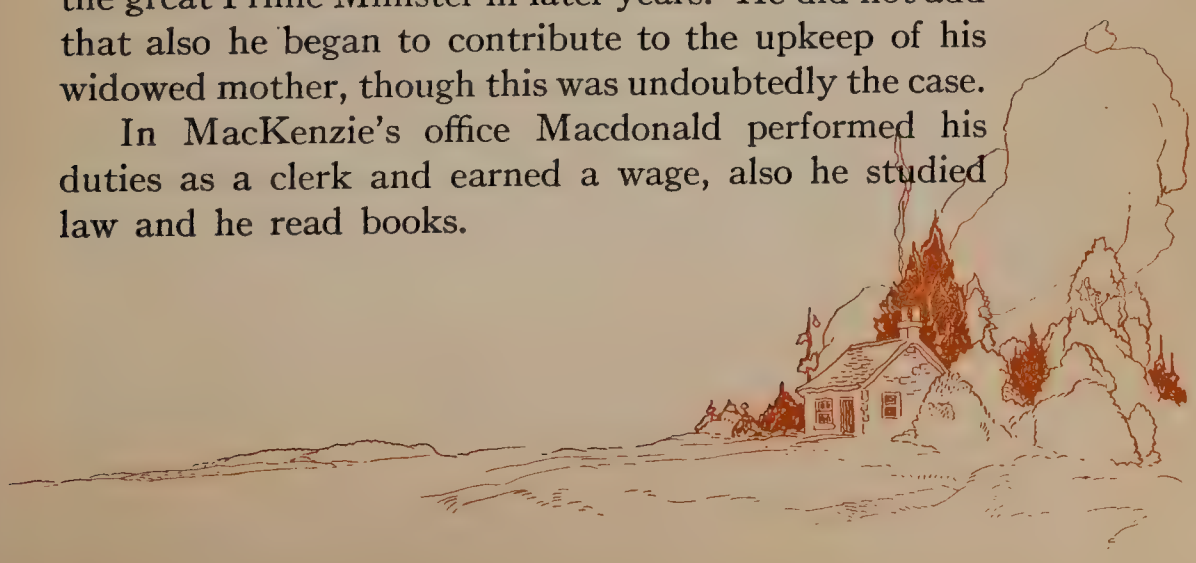
But—consider his life; especially, consider his youth, his boyhood.

"I had no boyhood," he once said to a friend. And no doubt he said it without complaint, but, inevitably, with bitterness. It was a true saying, since at the age of fifteen John A. Macdonald had to earn his own living, and help support his home people as well.

He was born in Scotland in the year of Waterloo, 1815. His father was an adventurous commercial man who failed to make good in Glasgow and emigrated to Canada in 1820. John was the third son of a family of five when his parents settled in Ontario. The father vainly endeavoured to find a firm footing in several districts of the province—Hay Bay and Stone Mills. Finally he settled in Kingston, where he died. The mother of John, "a woman of great intellectual vigour and strong personality, quiet in manner and with a keen sense of humour," carried on, helping her husband and training her children—to the best of her ability.

John went to school in Kingston at the age of ten and left when he was fifteen. He may or may not have attended some elementary school before this; but at fifteen his school days ended, and he became a junior clerk or office boy, in the office of George MacKenzie, a lawyer of Kingston, with whom he lodged. "From the age of fifteen I began to earn my own living" wrote the great Prime Minister in later years. He did not add that also he began to contribute to the upkeep of his widowed mother, though this was undoubtedly the case.

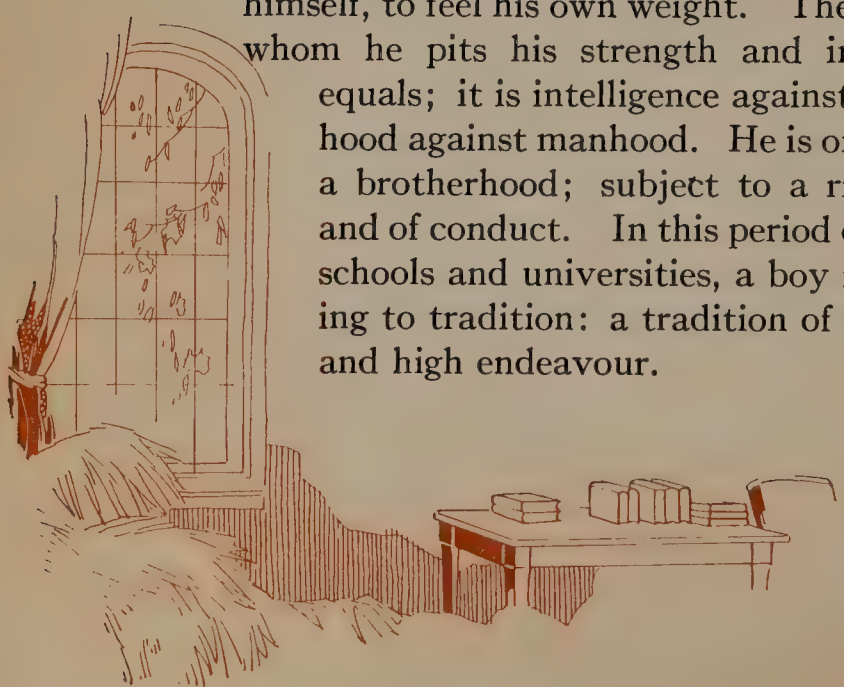
In MacKenzie's office Macdonald performed his duties as a clerk and earned a wage, also he studied law and he read books.



He was a boy gifted with more than the average imagination and intelligence; a boy popular with everyone. already a personality. Because he "had no boyhood," he lost much of the joy of life. Instead of mixing with boys of his own age and of his own thoughts and instincts, he was forced, at fifteen, as an inferior, both in age and experience, to mix with men. Instead of joining issue with his fellows in sports and scholastic training, he had to attend a lawyer's office for his board, and a wage of a few dollars a month.

Millions of men have had the same experience—but few of those millions have become great Prime Ministers.

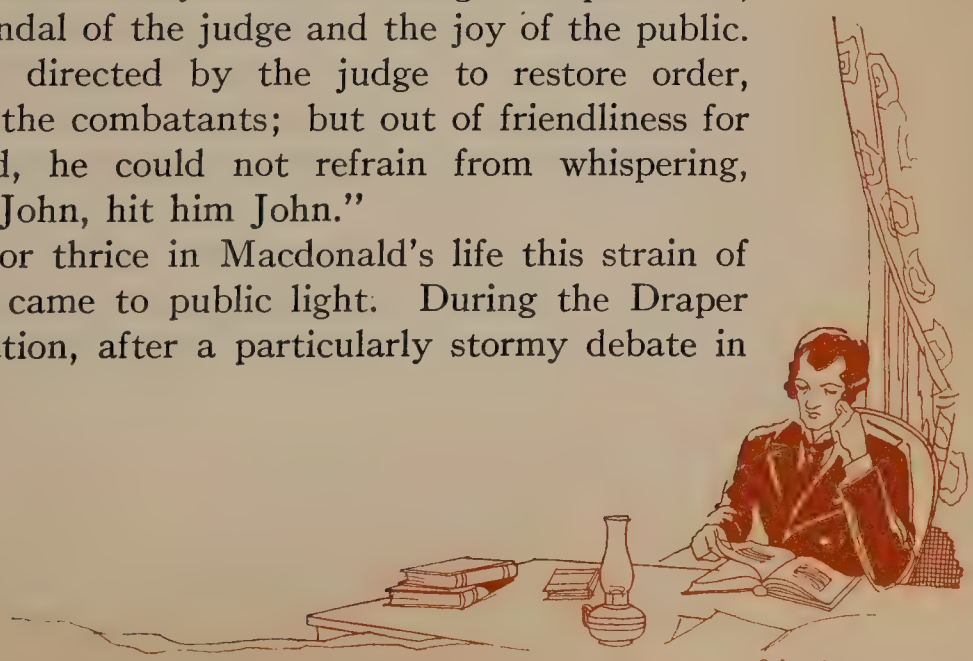
The most important years of a young man's life are those years from fifteen to nineteen. In those four years the foundation of his character is formed. Though he is not an adult man, during that period he has the instincts of a man, and the restless energy of youth. Every youth should be able to mix with his fellows on equal terms; on the playing fields or in the lecture halls he should confront his equals in age and experience. Thus is he given a chance to measure himself, to feel his own weight. The colleagues against whom he pits his strength and intelligence are his equals; it is intelligence against intelligence, manhood against manhood. He is one of a community, a brotherhood; subject to a rigid code of ethics and of conduct. In this period of his life, in proper schools and universities, a boy is moulded according to tradition: a tradition of manliness, courage and high endeavour.



Though Macdonald was conscious of all the advantages he lost through being forced to leave school at such an early age, he never complained—save that once, "I had no boyhood." And certainly he never permitted the deprivation to affect his happy, sunny temperament. He went on with his job in the lawyer's office, studying and reading, and showing early evidence of an unusual brilliance. When only seventeen years old he was sent by his employer to look after a branch office at Napanee, and a year later was given charge of the business of another lawyer during his protracted absence from Canada.

He was called to the bar in 1836, after six years' experience and study in Mr. MacKenzie's office, and in the twenty-first year of his age. Immediately he started in business on his own account in Kingston. His wonderfully cheerful disposition and industrious habits, brought him immediate business. From the beginning he was successful in his profession, though occasionally his habits were perhaps a little eccentric. For instance, it is on record that, on the occasion of his first case in court, he became so excited in argument with the opposing counsel that blows were exchanged. In short, the two lawyers had a free fight in open court, to the scandal of the judge and the joy of the public. The crier, directed by the judge to restore order, separated the combatants; but out of friendliness for Macdonald, he could not refrain from whispering, "Hit him John, hit him John."

Twice or thrice in Macdonald's life this strain of pugnacity came to public light. During the Draper administration, after a particularly stormy debate in

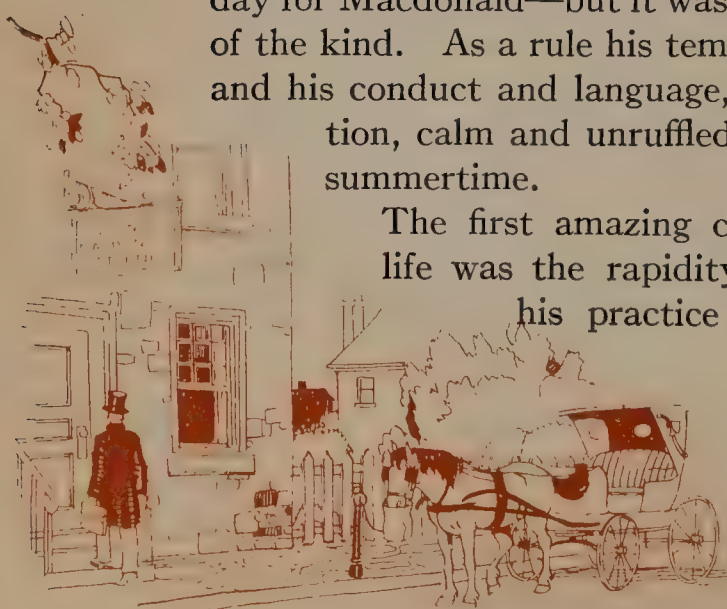


Macdonald was a great lover of books

the House, Macdonald sent such a hostile message to to the Solicitor-General, Blake, that he was promptly taken into custody by the sergeant-at-arms. On another occasion, before Confederation, when he was Prime Minister of the United Canadas, he became so incensed by a speech made by Colonel Rankin, a private member, that Macdonald sent the gallant soldier-politician a challenge. "I need hardly say," he instructed his second, "that circumstanced as I am, any meeting must take place out of Canada, but I am sure you will pay every regard to Mr. Rankin's convenience in his choice of the place of meeting." The "meeting" never took place. Rankin, recognizing that he was in the wrong, offered a complete apology, which Macdonald accepted, and the two men became close friends.

Probably Macdonald absolutely lost control of himself in the House only on one occasion. That was due to an attack by George Brown who taunted the Prime Minister with inconsistency and many evil things. Macdonald sprang to his feet in a white heat of temper. He poured upon Brown a torrent of invective, charged him with blackguardly conduct; of falsifying evidence, suborning witnesses to commit perjury—terrible indictments; all of them probably untrue. It was a bad day for Macdonald—but it was his first and last offence of the kind. As a rule his temper was well controlled; and his conduct and language, in debate or conversation, calm and unruffled as a woodland pool in summertime.

The first amazing chapter in Macdonald's life was the rapidity of his success during his practice as a lawyer. A year



John A. Macdonald's law office, Kingston

after he started business on his own account, two interesting men entered his office as students—Oliver Mowat and Alexander Campbell. Twenty-eight years after, both these men were members of Macdonald's cabinet. The two pupils and their lawyer-master were eventually knighted for services to Canada; Macdonald was Prime Minister of Canada, Mowat Prime Minister of Ontario, Campbell held important offices in the Dominion Cabinet, and both he and Mowat served terms as Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario.

The young lawyer of twenty-two had an interesting office. At twenty-seven, after he had been practicing for six years, Macdonald was able to afford a long visit to England; that was in '42. In '43 he admitted his ex-student Campbell into partnership, married a Scotch lady, Miss Isabella Clark, and had begun to take an interest in public life by seeking, and obtaining, election as an alderman for the City of Kingston.

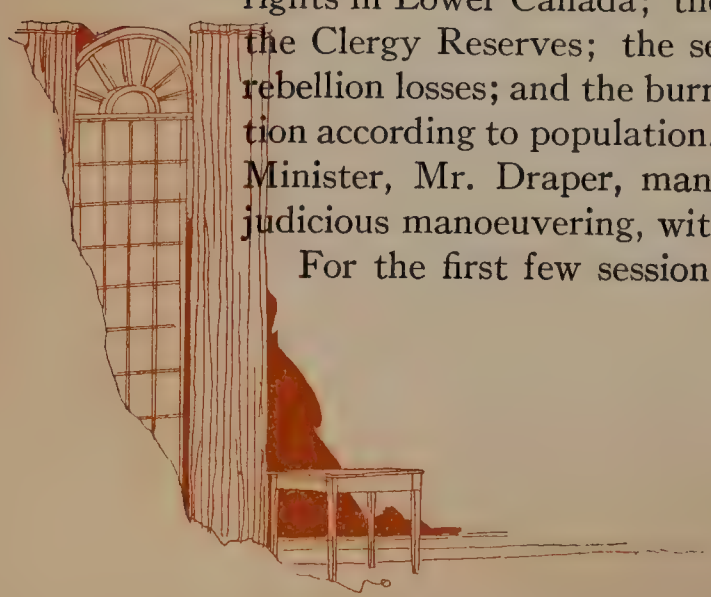
Unfortunately, from the second year of her married life, Mrs. Macdonald became a confirmed invalid. She was forced to spend the greater part of her life in search of health in warmer climates. Her indifferent health was a constant anxiety to Macdonald who was a devoted husband, and her protracted absences from Canada made it impossible for the young lawyer-politician to enjoy the advantages of a continuous home life. Of the two sons of their marriage, one was accidentally killed when an infant, and the other, Hugh John, became a member of Parliament for Winnipeg, and later Premier of Manitoba.

A year after his marriage, in '44, Macdonald entered Parliament as Conservative member for Kingston. It



was a period of transition; political parties were undisciplined mobs, ideas and policies were alike chaotic. Rule by the Governor still continued in fact, if not in theory, though the end of that primitive system of government was in sight. Macdonald was elected on a strongly patriotic note. His election address contained the message: "I therefore need scarcely state my firm belief that the prosperity of Canada depends upon its permanent connection with the Mother Country, and I shall resist to the utmost any attempt which may tend to weaken that union."

At that time the political situation was abnormal. A fairly strong wing of the Reform Party openly and actively favoured annexation to the United States. Another party advocated the formation of an independent republic, and a large section of the French people in Lower Canada were willing to support any form of government so long as it had nothing to do with Britain. All sorts of domestic troubles imperilled the peace of the country. The one parliament governed both Upper and Lower Canada—two isolated states in a vast continent, divided the one against the other by language, history and religion, but united in government. Parliament was distracted by such tangled problems as that heritage of a feudal past, the seigniorial rights in Lower Canada; the long standing question of the Clergy Reserves; the settlement of the claims for rebellion losses; and the burning question of representation according to population. The Conservative Prime Minister, Mr. Draper, managed to keep in office by judicious manoeuvering, with a very weak majority.

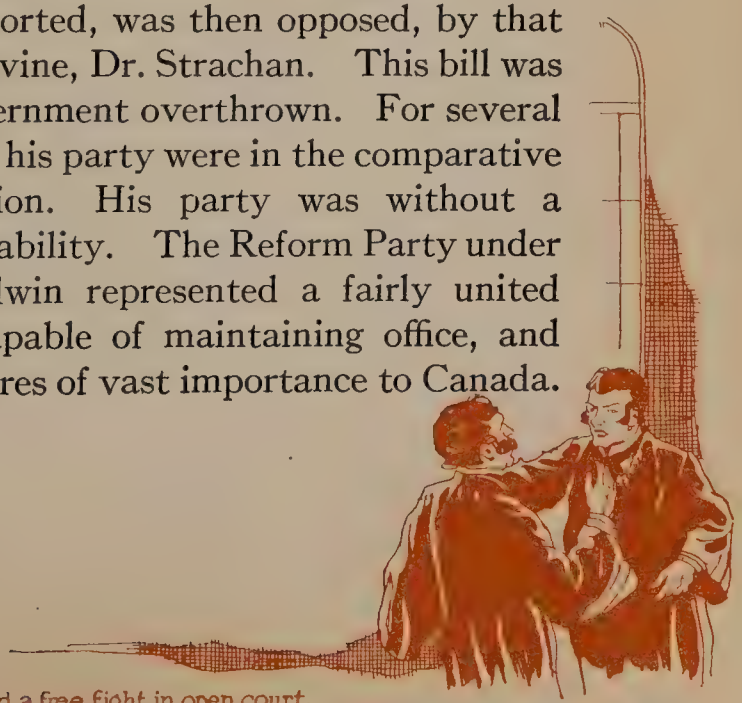


For the first few sessions of his parliamentary life

Macdonald took little part in the active work of the House. He was absorbing the atmosphere of politics. He spoke but seldom, though he must have made a favourable impression on the House and its leader, for we find in '46 Draper advising the Governor-General: "In reference to the situation of Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr. Draper humbly submits that a man of activity of mind, and familiar with business details, is imperatively required in the department. Mr. Draper would think a great advantage gained if Mr. J. A. Macdonald, the member for Kingston, would take the office."

This represented rapid progress and promotion for Macdonald. Though the Governor agreed, events prevented the young member from immediately assuming office. Lord Elgin arrived from England early in '47 as the new Governor-General, and it was not until the May of that year that Macdonald accepted office as Receiver-General, and so commenced an official career destined to continue for half a century.

During his first year as a minister he made a valiant but futile endeavour to effect a settlement of the vexed question of University endowment; he introduced a bill, which, first supported, was then opposed, by that autocratic Toronto divine, Dr. Strachan. This bill was rejected and the Government overthrown. For several years Macdonald and his party were in the comparative seclusion of opposition. His party was without a leader of outstanding ability. The Reform Party under Lafontaine and Baldwin represented a fairly united force, and proved capable of maintaining office, and passing certain measures of vast importance to Canada.

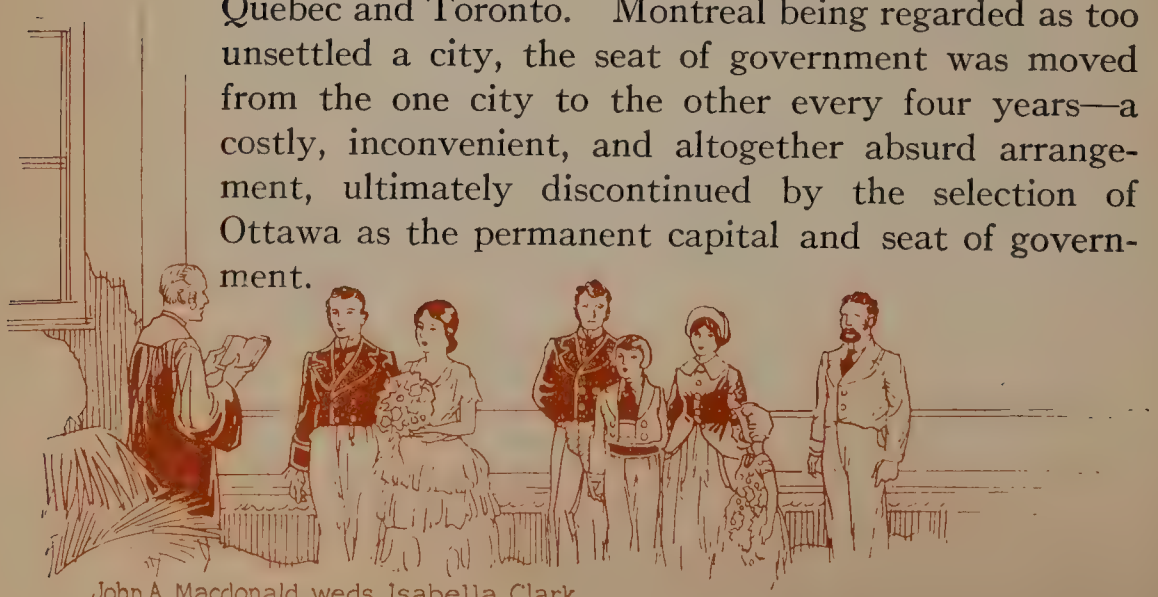


They had a free fight in open court

It was during this period that the Conservative Party fell into national disgrace by reason of its absurd attitude in regard to Lord Elgin's action in officially recognizing Canada's right to the principle of responsible government. To the two leaders, Lafontaine and Baldwin, of the Reform Party, and to Lord Elgin, definite credit is due for the passing of the Rebellion Losses Bill, and so determining the right of the Canadas for a system of unrestricted government; with the merits or demerits of the bill history has little concern; but its acceptance by the Governor-General had an infinite effect on the character of the Canadian Government. This issue was a constitutional one, and the Reform Party carried it through.

Though Macdonald adversely criticized the bill, as a bill, during its discussion in the House, there is no evidence that he took any part in the disgraceful attacks on Lord Elgin after the passing of this measure. It will be remembered that Elgin was assaulted in Montreal by a rabble of malcontents, who later succeeded in destroying by fire the Canadian House of Assembly that city.

The outcome of the destruction of the Montreal Parliament Buildings was that for the next sixteen years members sat in the Legislative Buildings at Quebec and Toronto. Montreal being regarded as too unsettled a city, the seat of government was moved from the one city to the other every four years—a costly, inconvenient, and altogether absurd arrangement, ultimately discontinued by the selection of Ottawa as the permanent capital and seat of government.

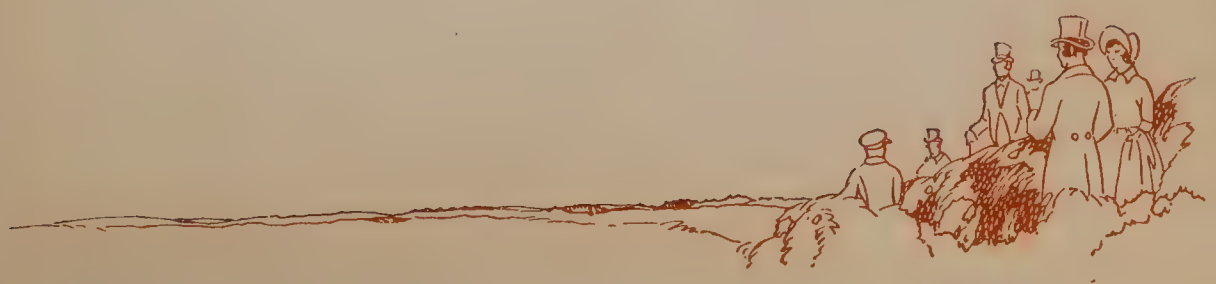


John A. Macdonald weds Isabella Clark

During the six years Macdonald was in opposition, from '48 to '54, Canadian affairs sank to a low level; indeed the continued existence of Canada became a matter of considerable doubt. The adoption by England of Free Trade and the consequent abolition of Canada's preference in British markets, added to the Old Country's apparent indifference to Canada, and a growing dislike by the various provinces to the system of Imperial Governors, combined to popularize the policy of annexation to the United States. Men who had long been Loyalists, devoted to the Old Land and the old traditions, patriots who had fought against the rebels, actually signed in favour of this annexation. As a rule they were the men of means; the bankers, landowners and agriculturists. The outlook became more and more obscured in gloom. There were dozens of foolish but irritating questions which seemed incapable of solution.

Macdonald refused to have anything to do with this annexation declaration. He became interested in the foundation of a movement which eventually proved to be of great constructive value to Canada—The British American League. This league, originally established in Montreal, soon maintained branches throughout the Canadas. Its objects were "Permanent connection with the Mother Country, the union of the North American Colonies, protection of home industries, economy in local expenditure"—and so on. Eventually these points were embodied in the great united party Macdonald led.

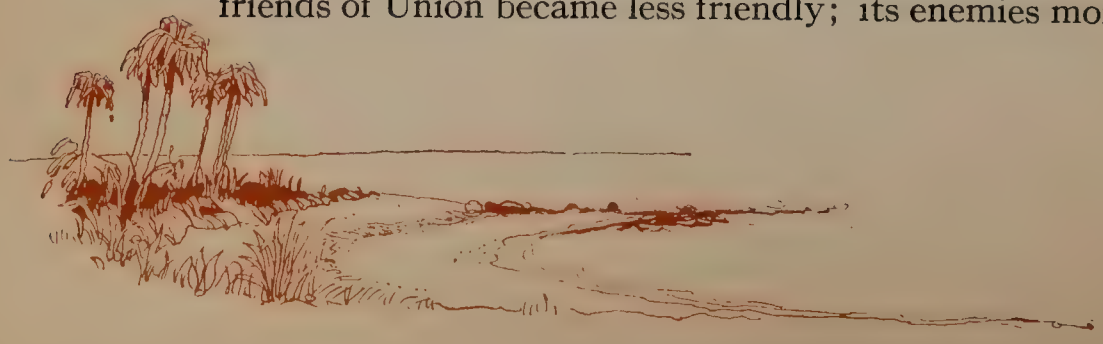
Naturally other parties and organizations were formed: "American Annexation" groups, "Reds,"



"Republicans"—all sorts and all kinds; but "The British American League" alone survived and conquered.

The Lafontaine-Baldwin Party gave place to the Hincks-Morris Government, and this in '54 was defeated. Sir Allan MacNab, who had succeeded Draper as leader of the Conservatives, was called upon to form a ministry. Since he had no majority in the House, MacNab could only succeed in this by some sort of a coalition. Macdonald, MacNab's lieutenant, suggested the French-Canadian Liberals as being the most eligible party for this purpose, and so a successful coalition was founded. In this manner was founded the great Liberal-Conservative Party with which Macdonald for so many years dominated Canadian affairs. This new government was known as the MacNab-Morin Administration; in the course of its existence it cleared up several of the great outstanding "domestic" difficulties of the Canadas—the Clergy Reserves, the question of Seigniorial Tenure and one or two others. But the MacNab-Morin coalition cannot be credited with any constructive policy of outstanding merit. It represents a period of tedious debate; of party bickerings, intrigue and talk. Brown and Cartier, and Brown and Macdonald were always at grips. Then came into being the great problem of proportionate representation. The population of Upper Canada was increasing with great rapidity; that of Lower Canada remained stationary.

The union of the two Canadas seemed suddenly to become a monstrous stumbling block—the condition created so many difficulties that even the greatest friends of Union became less friendly; its enemies more

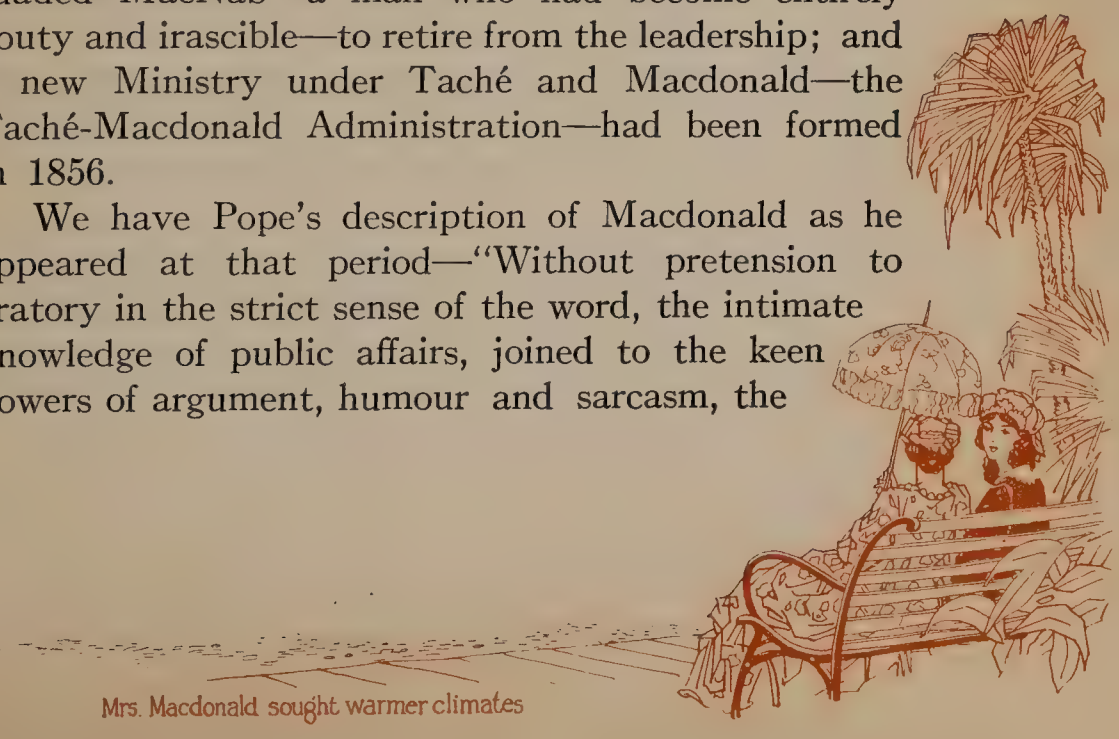


and more noisy. A great deal of religious feeling became intermingled with political affairs—and in every country, at all periods, that condition has always proved an infallible cause of trouble and discord. But those ten years of unproductive political tumult provided for Macdonald a period of apprenticeship in the science of governing, for part of the time he was Prime Minister; also it perfected him in the art of debate.

In after years he frequently remarked that the greatest triumphs of his life were achieved during these ten years of monotonous parliamentary work. Perhaps this opinion was due to the fact that inevitably one's first victories stand out with a sharpness which is apt to become slightly dulled by repetition. Even success can become monotonous. But certainly in those years Macdonald lived no inactive life.

George Brown had become the dominant power, both personally and politically, in Ontario; Cartier was equally supreme in Quebec; yet John A. Macdonald controlled the House. By a rather dubious, if necessary political manoeuvre, the Conservative Party had persuaded MacNab—a man who had become entirely gouty and irascible—to retire from the leadership; and a new Ministry under Taché and Macdonald—the Taché-Macdonald Administration—had been formed in 1856.

We have Pope's description of Macdonald as he appeared at that period—"Without pretension to oratory in the strict sense of the word, the intimate knowledge of public affairs, joined to the keen powers of argument, humour and sarcasm, the



Mrs. Macdonald sought warmer climates

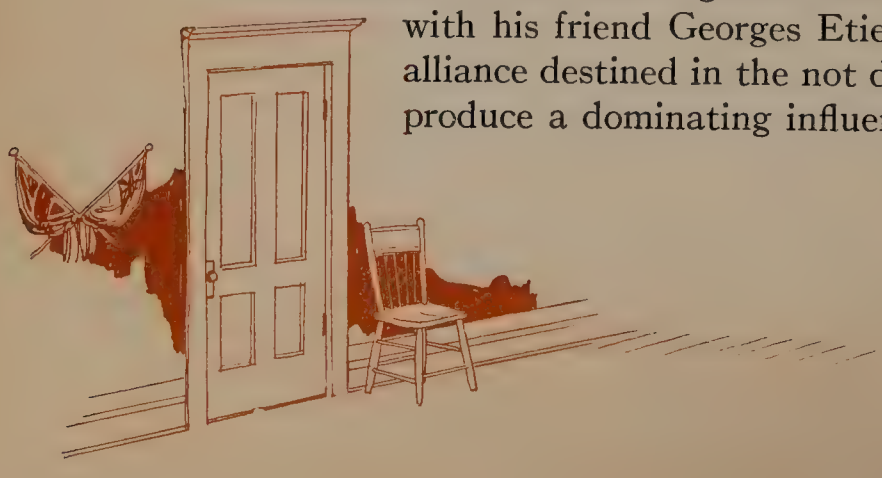
ready wit, the wealth of illustration and brilliant repartee, gave to his speeches, set off by a striking presence and singularly persuasive style, a potency which was well-nigh irresistible. . . . In the days of his prime, he inspired, not merely his followers with a devotion almost without parallel in political annals, but drew to his side first one and then another of his opponents."

It is remarkable that at the end of his long and brilliant career, Macdonald was able to say that almost every leading man who had begun his political life as his opponent, ended by being his colleague and friend.

The great exception, of course, was George Brown.

In '57 the Imperial Government invited Canada to participate in an enquiry into the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company to the northern and western parts of what is now the Dominion of Canada. Macdonald sent Chief Justice Draper to England to represent the Canadian claim before the committee. This action resulted eventually in the inclusion of these vast territories within the boundaries of the Dominion.

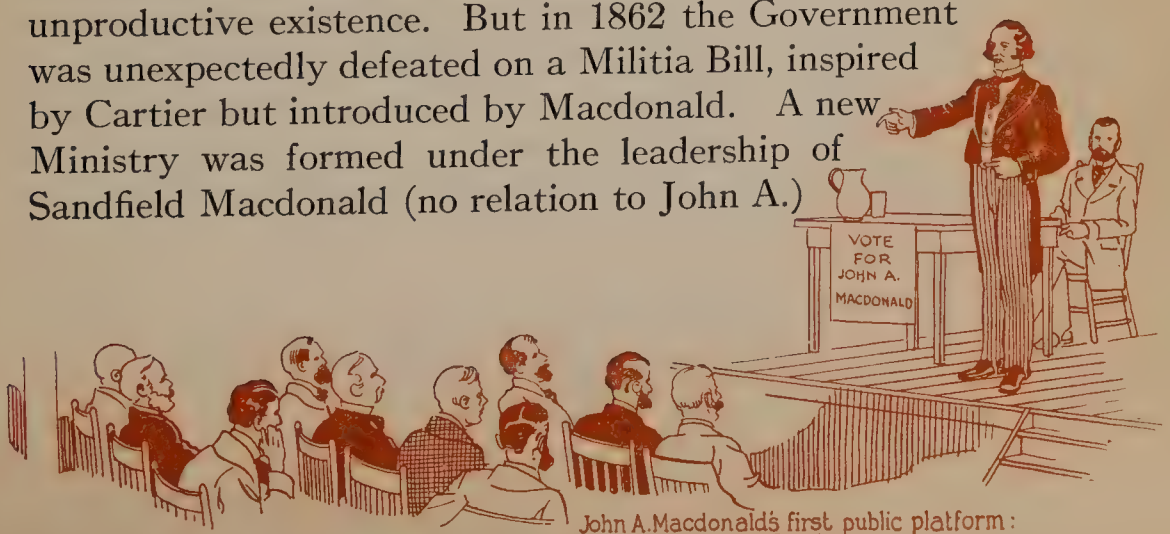
Towards the end of '57 Colonel Taché was forced by failing health to resign, and Macdonald formed his first government with himself as Prime Minister. Though he was actually the leader during the Taché-Macdonald Administration, nominally, he was Attorney-General West (that is Attorney-General for Upper Canada) and Taché nominally the Premier. Macdonald formed his first government in conjunction with his friend Georges Etienne Cartier, an alliance destined in the not distant future to produce a dominating influence in the birth



of this nation. The history of Macdonald's first government was somewhat calamitous. He immediately dissolved the House and appealed to the people. The result was that while the new government obtained a large majority in Lower Canada, in Upper Canada it was hopelessly beaten by the party following George Brown.

For a time Macdonald struggled along in office, but in '58 he was beaten by Brown on the curious motion that "in the opinion of this House the City of Ottawa ought not to be the permanent seat of government of this province." Brown was invited by the Governor to form a government, and he with difficulty got together a ministry which lasted forty-eight hours. Refused a dissolution, Brown's government was defeated and His Excellency summoned Alexander Galt, an authority on finance, to form a cabinet; but Galt had no kind of a following in the House and had to refuse. Cartier was then sent for and with Macdonald he formed an administration which was practically the same as that recently dissolved. The chief difference being that it had now become the Cartier-Macdonald instead of the Macdonald-Cartier Ministry.

Galt accepted the office of Finance Minister in this administration on the express stipulation that federation should be actively supported by the new ministry. For four years this coalition continued a precarious and unproductive existence. But in 1862 the Government was unexpectedly defeated on a Militia Bill, inspired by Cartier but introduced by Macdonald. A new Ministry was formed under the leadership of Sandfield Macdonald (no relation to John A.)



John A. Macdonald's first public platform: Municipal Politics

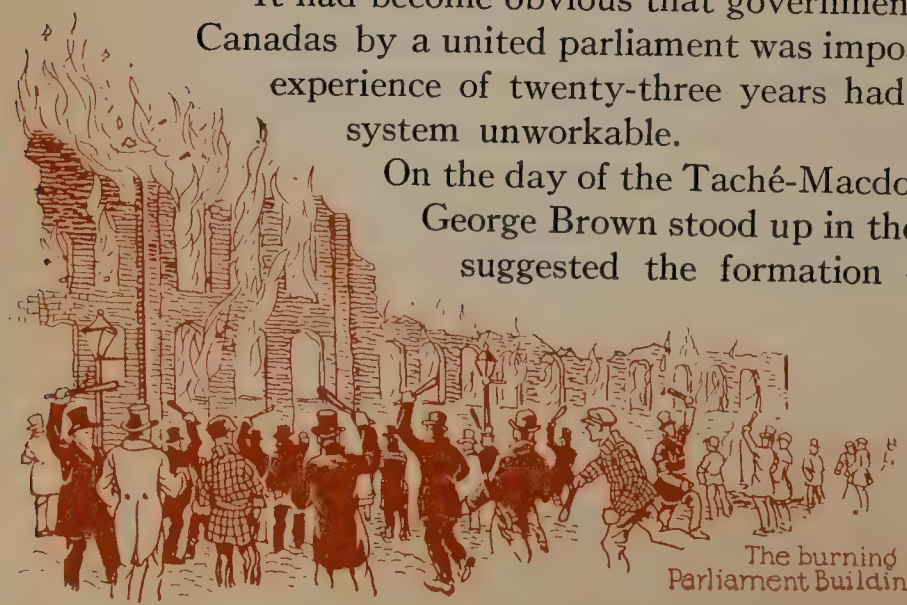
and L. V. Sicotte. The fact that the Governor sent for Sandfield Macdonald in place of George Brown may be taken as evidence of the waning power and popularity of the leader of the Grits.

This new Government rode the storm of Parliament gallantly enough, but hopelessly. Defeated, they joined forces with other parties; thus reconstructed, but always feeble and impotent, they existed until 1864; then they fell.

The Governor-General had to persuade Colonel Taché to emerge from retirement in order to form a new Ministry. This he did in conjunction with John A. Macdonald, both Taché and Macdonald accepting office with the utmost reluctance. By this time John A. had decided to withdraw from public life; he was tired of it. However, he joined Taché and their administration lasted until the June of '64, when it was overthrown. Thus in three years, four administrations had been formed and destroyed, and two general elections had not sent any party into power strong enough to maintain a stable government. There was a political deadlock. No leader wanted to attempt the formation of a new Ministry. Taché desired to return to peaceful retirement, Macdonald wanted to have done with politics.

It had become obvious that government of the two Canadas by a united parliament was impossible. The experience of twenty-three years had proved the system unworkable.

On the day of the Taché-Macdonald defeat, George Brown stood up in the House and suggested the formation of a strong



The burning of the Parliament Buildings, Montreal

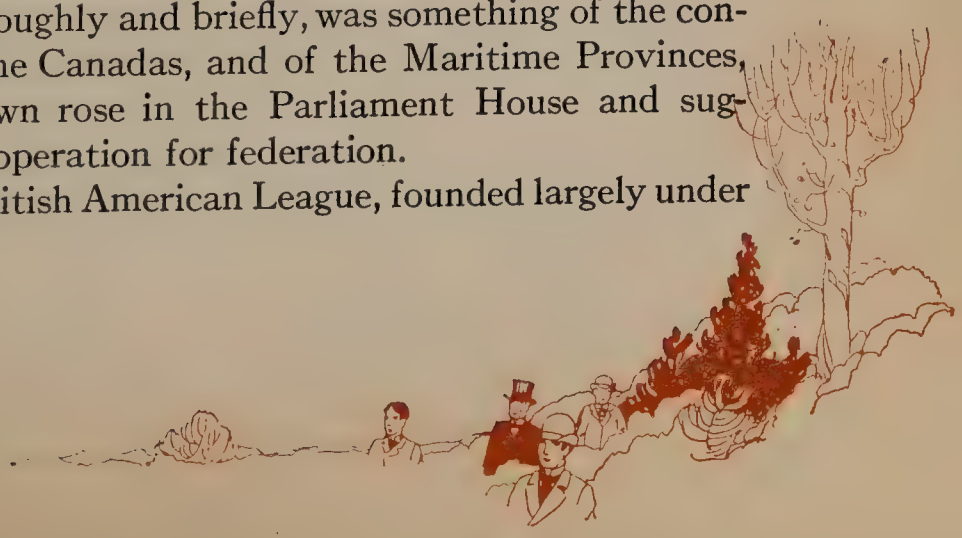
coalition to extricate the country from its overwhelming difficulties. He offered the assistance of himself and his friends to enable the defeated government to carry on the affairs of the country, while preparing a scheme of federal union. The first suggestion was that the federation should affect only Upper and Lower Canada, but the larger scheme of the union of all the provinces of British North America had already stirred the public imagination, and that became the policy of the dominant party.

The whole country was ripe for federation. The American War of Secession had commenced in 1861 and out of that war several complications had arisen between Britain and the Northern States. There were the "Trent" and the "Alabama" incidents. Canada feared invasion. Only by a union of all the forces of the provinces could any adequate assistance be offered to the soldiers of the Mother Country who were arriving in considerable numbers. American filibusters were harassing the Canadian borders. The provinces of British North America had no common policy, no means of joint common action.

Also there were the commercial reasons. The age of railway building was beginning; free communication between the provinces became an obvious necessity. The separate customs barriers were becoming an intolerable handicap; the varying systems of law were found a tremendous nuisance—a menace.

That, roughly and briefly, was something of the condition of the Canadas, and of the Maritime Provinces, when Brown rose in the Parliament House and suggested co-operation for federation.

The British American League, founded largely under

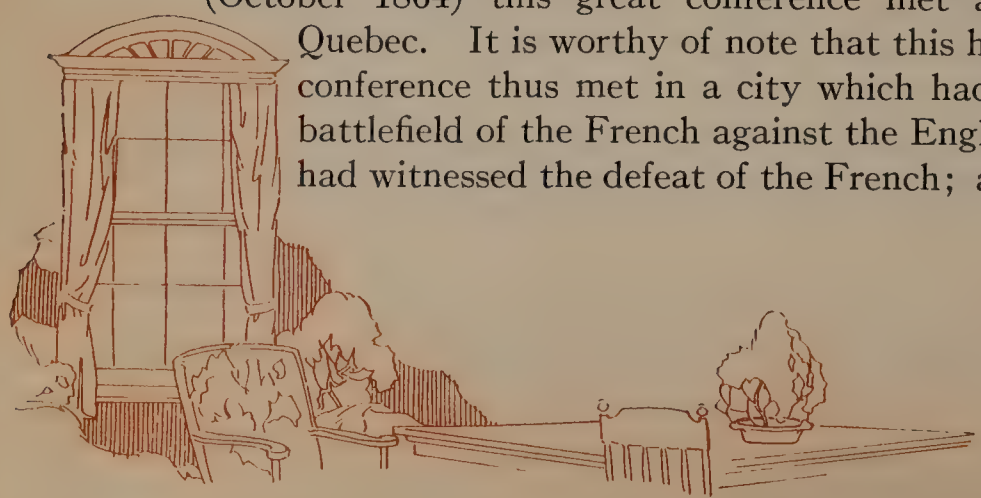


Macdonald's inspiration, had adopted the confederation of all the provinces as one of its main objects. For fifteen years it had been educating public opinion in that direction. Most of the leading politicians had been favourably considering the policy for more than a decade—especially Galt in the Canadas, and Howe and Tupper in the Maritimes.

Brown first proposed the federation of the two Canadas, finally he joined with Macdonald, Cartier, Galt and other leaders in an earnest struggle for a confederated British North America.

It has been well said that Confederation had many fathers; to one man alone it is mainly due that the child took a vigorous hold of life. Though Macdonald didn't eagerly accept the proffered aid of Brown—he was a tired man, yearning for rest—when he found that the other ministers of the defeated Taché-Macdonald Cabinet were willing to put up a big fight for the union, the leader began to lead. For the next three years at least he outworked the strongest, he outshone the most brilliant, he outmanoeuvered the most cunning, and in the end he outvoted and overcame all opposition.

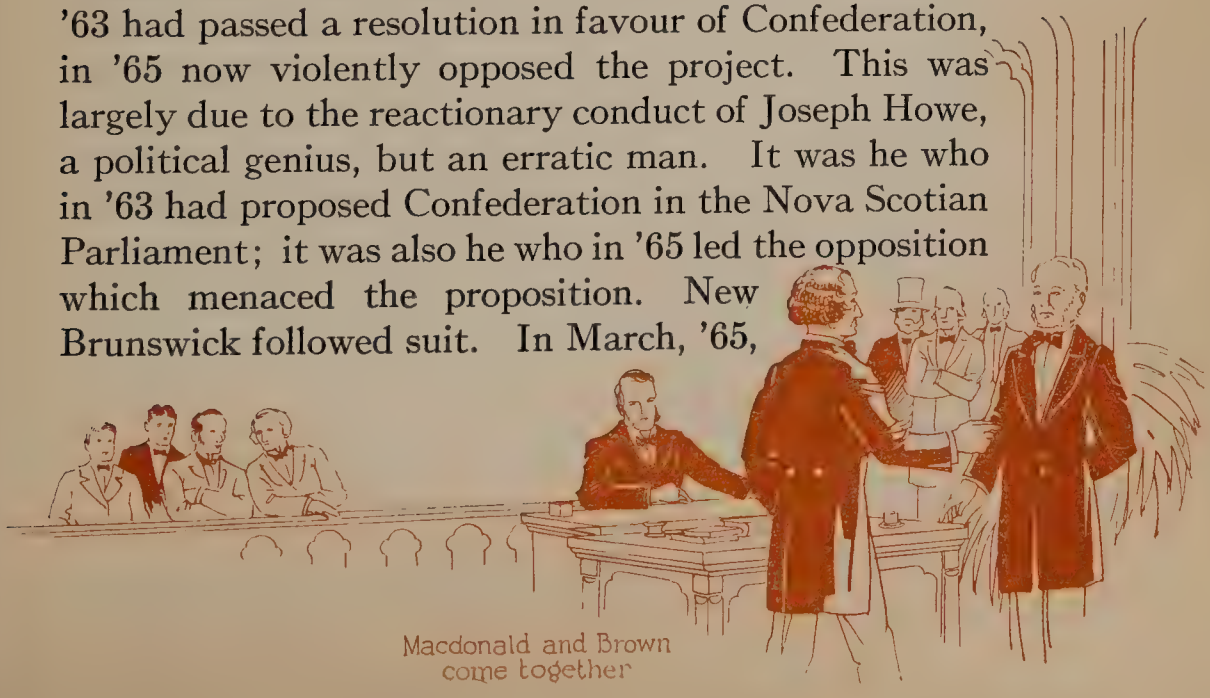
We are familiar with the growth of the movement towards national unity. Macdonald and his ministers joined a conference formed at Charlottetown to discuss the union of the Maritimes, in order to place before the meeting the wider project. Later in the same year (October 1864) this great conference met again in Quebec. It is worthy of note that this historical conference thus met in a city which had been a battlefield of the French against the English, and had witnessed the defeat of the French; and that



it met under the chairmanship of Sir Etienne Taché, the French Premier of the two Canadas. The nominal chairman of this Quebec meeting was Taché, the actual leader was Macdonald. Macdonald now began to grasp authority and hold the leadership with both hands.

This conference lasted from the 10th to the 28th of October, and its deliberations, and the seventy-two resolutions which it passed, embody the main lines on which Confederation was finally accomplished. The following year negotiations were resumed in London. There the delegates explored the infinity of important detail attendant on this great policy. The financial relations between the various provinces, the equitable distribution of the public debts, the commercial policy—there were scores of great considerations. The constitution of the Upper House had to be determined. It was a mighty business.

In 1865 the delegates were back in their various provinces, ready to submit the new policy to their Parliaments. Then began a struggle, grim and great. Of all the provinces, Upper Canada, now Ontario, alone showed any enthusiasm for the project; the people of Quebec were vastly suspicious; Nova Scotia, which in '63 had passed a resolution in favour of Confederation, in '65 now violently opposed the project. This was largely due to the reactionary conduct of Joseph Howe, a political genius, but an erratic man. It was he who in '63 had proposed Confederation in the Nova Scotian Parliament; it was also he who in '65 led the opposition which menaced the proposition. New Brunswick followed suit. In March, '65,



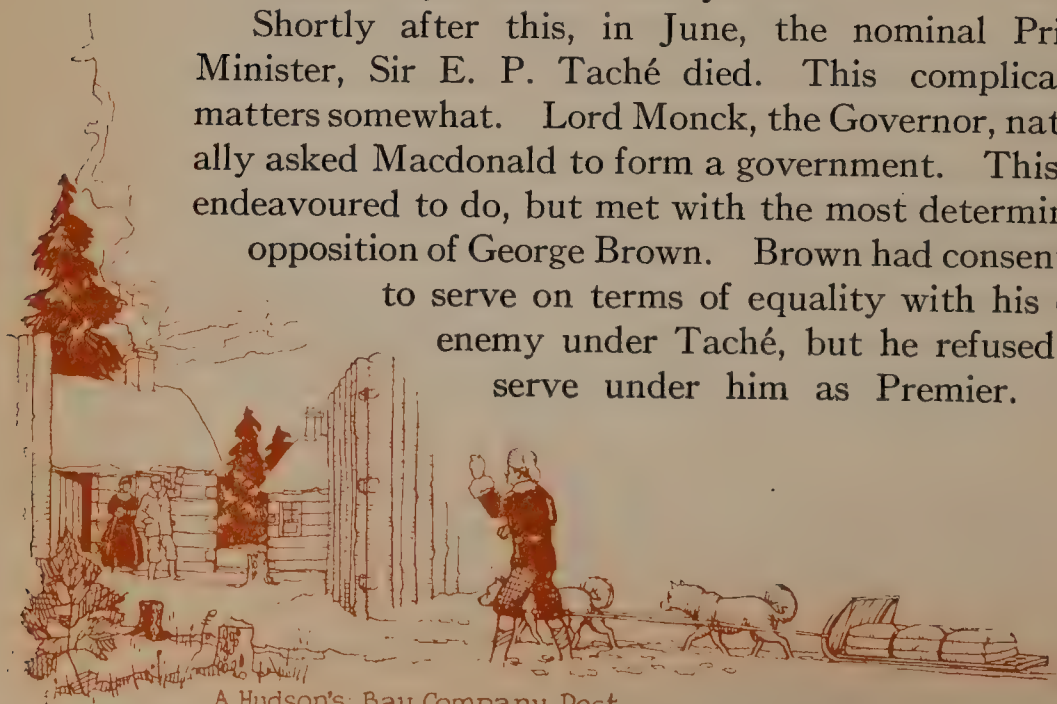
Macdonald and Brown come together

the local House, which had accepted Confederation, appealed to the people for confirmation, and were heavily defeated. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island withdrew from the negotiations. The situation was one of grave anxiety. Many of the leaders began to feel the hopelessness of it all.

Macdonald kept a strong hold and began to pull political and Imperial strings. He encouraged Tupper to bide his time—though that brave man needed little encouragement in battle. With New Brunswick he dealt very effectively at a later date.

Meanwhile he introduced the Quebec resolutions to the Canadian Parliament. It is on record that the speeches made on that occasion were of a high order, worthy of the greatness of the occasion. Macdonald, Cartier, Brown, Galt and the eloquent D'Arcy McGee supported the proposals; Holton, Dorion, Dunkin and Sandfield Macdonald opposed them. On the 11th of March, 1865, the House passed the resolutions by a vote of ninety-one to thirty-three. An analysis of this vote shows that the voting of the Upper Canada representatives was fifty-four to eight, and those of Lower Canada, thirty-seven to twenty-five.

Shortly after this, in June, the nominal Prime Minister, Sir E. P. Taché died. This complicated matters somewhat. Lord Monck, the Governor, naturally asked Macdonald to form a government. This he endeavoured to do, but met with the most determined opposition of George Brown. Brown had consented to serve on terms of equality with his old enemy under Taché, but he refused to serve under him as Premier. He



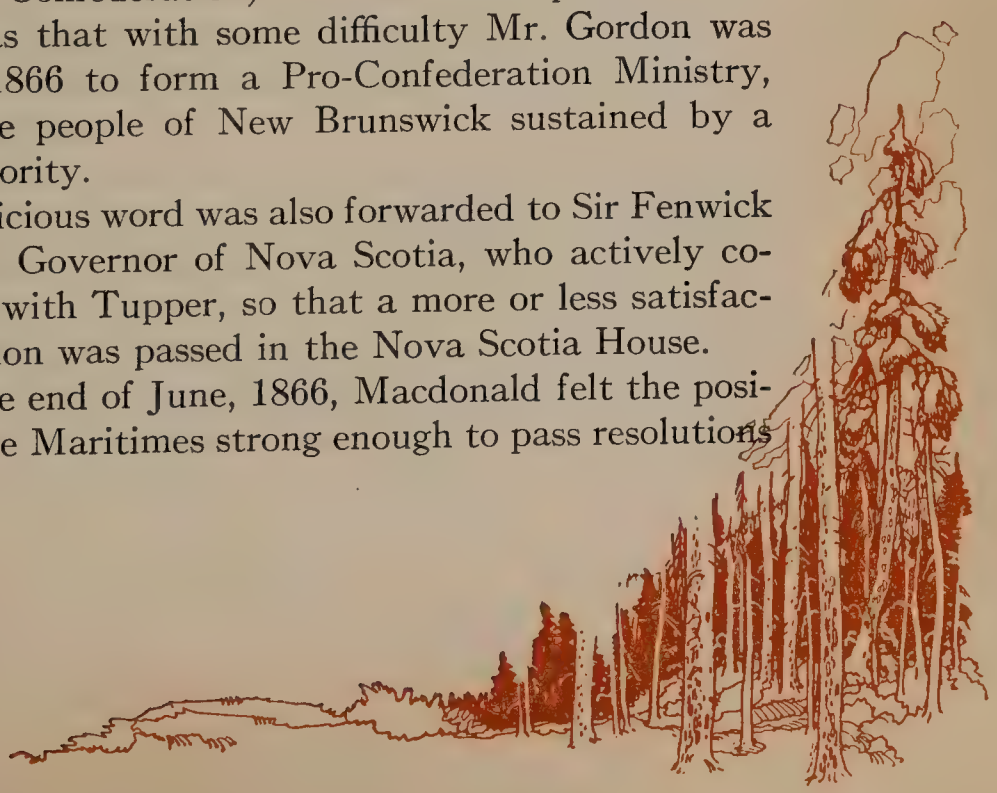
A Hudson's Bay Company Post

threatened to withdraw from the ministry if Macdonald succeeded Taché. Rather than permit the policy of Confederation be imperilled, Macdonald sank his personal feelings and submitted to a compromise by which Sir Narcisse Belleau, should become the nominal Premier, under whom Macdonald and Brown sat as ministers of equal status. But this expedient could not long continue effective. Macdonald's ascendency was so obvious, his leadership so marked, that Brown found the position unendurable. He resigned from the Cabinet in December, '65, and while he maintained an attitude of hostility to Macdonald in the columns of his newspaper, the *Globe*, he continued to give loyal support to the project of Confederation.

A mission under Macdonald was immediately sent to England to confer with Her Majesty's Government. The Home Government accepted the Confederation scheme with great enthusiasm. It was during this visit to England that Macdonald caused the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Caldwell, to influence Arthur Hamilton Gordon, the Governor of New Brunswick (who had opposed Confederation) to alter his opinion. The result was that with some difficulty Mr. Gordon was able in 1866 to form a Pro-Confederation Ministry, which the people of New Brunswick sustained by a large majority.

A judicious word was also forwarded to Sir Fenwick Williams, Governor of Nova Scotia, who actively co-operated with Tupper, so that a more or less satisfactory motion was passed in the Nova Scotia House.

By the end of June, 1866, Macdonald felt the position in the Maritimes strong enough to pass resolutions

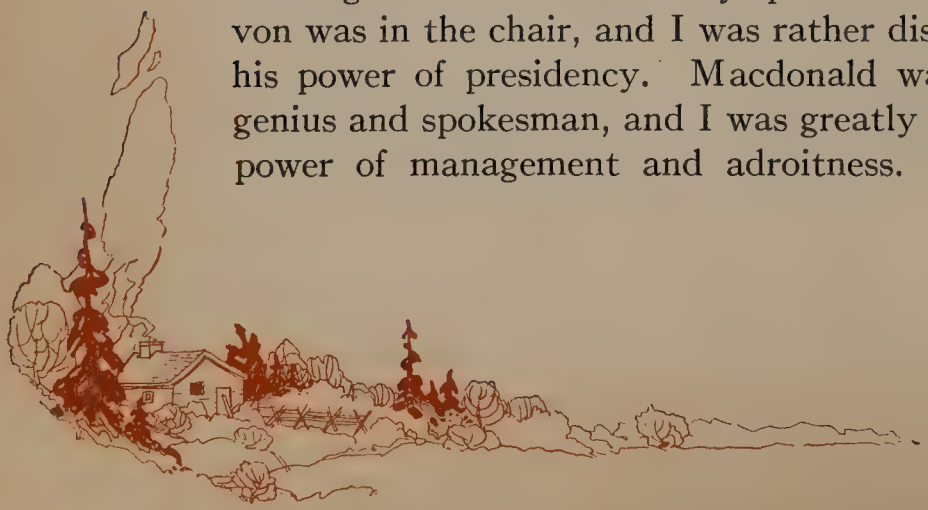


in the Canadian Parliament providing for the local legislatures of Upper and Lower Canada. He had to feel every step of his perilous political way. Macdonald was nervous of the Maritimes, and the Maritimes were nervous of Macdonald. Neither New Brunswick nor Nova Scotia had actually accepted the Quebec Resolutions. Each of these provinces had passed statements that they were authorizing the appointment of delegates to arrange with the Imperial Government a scheme of Union which "will effectively ensure just provision for the rights and interests of the province."

Macdonald's position—the position of Confederation—was infinitely precarious. He had to make but one false move and the Maritimes and Confederation would have been lost.

The great man manoeuvered and plotted and in the end, he conquered; on the 4th of December, '66, a conference, representing the Canadas and the Maritimes sat at the Westminster Palace Hotel in London, and sixty-nine resolutions, based on those of the Quebec conference, were passed.

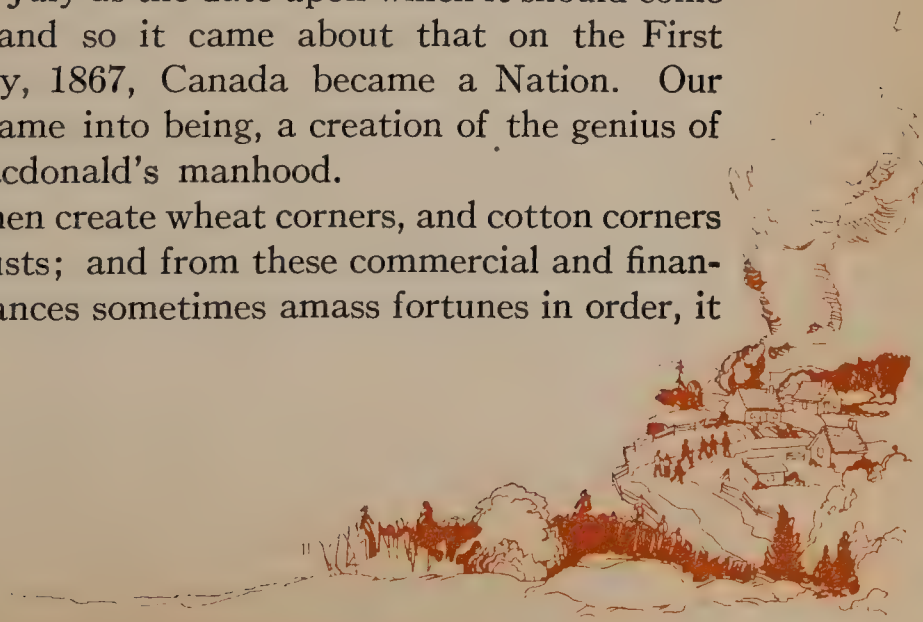
Macdonald's temper and resourcefulness were still taxed to the uttermost. It is pleasant to read the description of this conference as it was recorded by Sir F. Rogers, afterwards Lord Blachford, the permanent Imperial Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and certainly no mean judge of men. "They held many meetings at which I was always present. Lord Carnarvon was in the chair, and I was rather disappointed in his power of presidency. Macdonald was the ruling genius and spokesman, and I was greatly struck by his power of management and adroitness. The French



delegates were keenly on the watch for anything that weakened their securities; on the contrary, the Nova Scotian and New Brunswick delegates were very jealous of concession to the older provinces; while one main stipulation in favour of the French was open to constitutional objections on the part of the Home Government. Macdonald had to argue the question with the Home Government on a point on which the slightest divergence from the narrow line already agreed on in Canada was watched for—here by the French, and there by the English—as eager dogs watch a rat hole; a snap on one side might have provoked a snap on the other, and put an end to the concord. He stated and argued the case with cool, ready fluency, while at the same time you saw that every word was measured, and that while he was making for a point ahead, he was never for a moment unconscious of the rocks among which he had to steer."

In January, '67, this conference was resumed, and a series of draft bills drawn up. In February the completed bill was submitted to the English House, and on March 29th, it received the Royal assent, under the title "British North American Act, 1867." A Proclamation was issued from Windsor Castle, appointing the First day of July as the date upon which it should come into force, and so it came about that on the First day of July, 1867, Canada became a Nation. Our Dominion came into being, a creation of the genius of John A. Macdonald's manhood.

Clever men create wheat corners, and cotton corners and beef trusts; and from these commercial and financial disturbances sometimes amass fortunes in order, it



American Filibusters harassed the borders

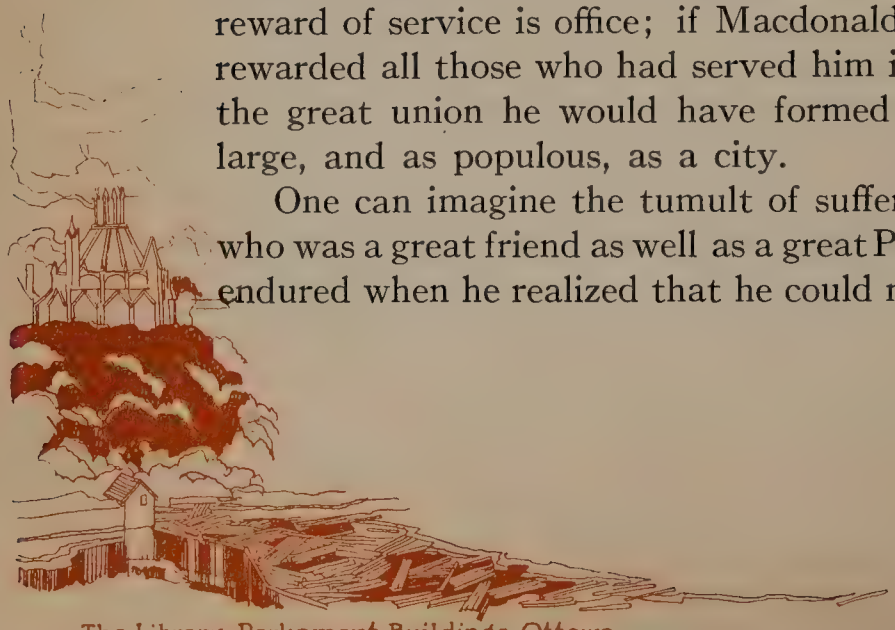
would seem, that their heirs may become idle and perhaps degenerate. John A. Macdonald created a Nation, at the cost of personal impoverishment, and thus the heirs of the world will be enriched; and our Empire of Nations is ennobled by the addition of that illustrious Dominion we call Canada.

Few men greater than Macdonald are known to history. With the possible exception of Cecil Rhodes, it is difficult to think of any Briton of the nineteenth century with whom a comparison is possible. And, in the splendid qualities of unselfishness, devotion to duty, freedom from avarice, disdain of personal gain, between these two there is little chance of accurate measurement. Macdonald lived and died a poor man; he sacrificed his entire existence in the service of the Nation he formed, and for the people whom he loved. There was no great blemish in his quality of greatness.

If the career of Macdonald had ended with the institution of Confederation, still would he be entitled to the proud name of the Dominion's greatest son. But he did not end there. Having launched a new Nation, Macdonald took command.

Naturally, he became the first Prime Minister of the Dominion, and naturally his political lot under the circumstances was not a happy one. In politics the reward of service is office; if Macdonald had properly rewarded all those who had served him in his fight for the great union he would have formed a Cabinet as large, and as populous, as a city.

One can imagine the tumult of suffering this man, who was a great friend as well as a great Prime Minister, endured when he realized that he could not adequately



The Library, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa

reward all those who had served him. Fortunately, among his lieutenants, were a few unselfish men—like Tupper and McGee—who were willing to wait.

Thus, in spite of many heartaches, he formed the first Dominion Cabinet and proceeded to consolidate Confederation. Not many men would have accepted that profoundly serious undertaking. Macdonald was undoubtedly a wonderful leader, but in that first Cabinet of the Dominion he led a strangely mixed pack. It was not only that he had to reward service, and stiffen the loyalty of powerful men whose allegiance seemed timid, but he was also forced to consider the claims of the different provinces and of the various political parties. So that five of the Cabinet had to represent Ontario, four Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick each claimed the right to two; and from the parties, seven were Conservatives, six Liberals, one Irish Catholic and another a representative of the English-speaking minority in Quebec.

In selecting this heterogeneous group for Canada's first Ministry, Macdonald stated: "I do not want it to be felt by any section in the country that they have no representative in the Cabinet and no influence in the Government."

In effect he said—this Nation must be governed by the representatives of all sections of the people who compose the Nation. And making the best of a complicated business he plunged into the business of government.

We cannot in this place print even a record of the more outstanding triumphs for Canada which occurred during John A. Macdonald's leadership. He was the

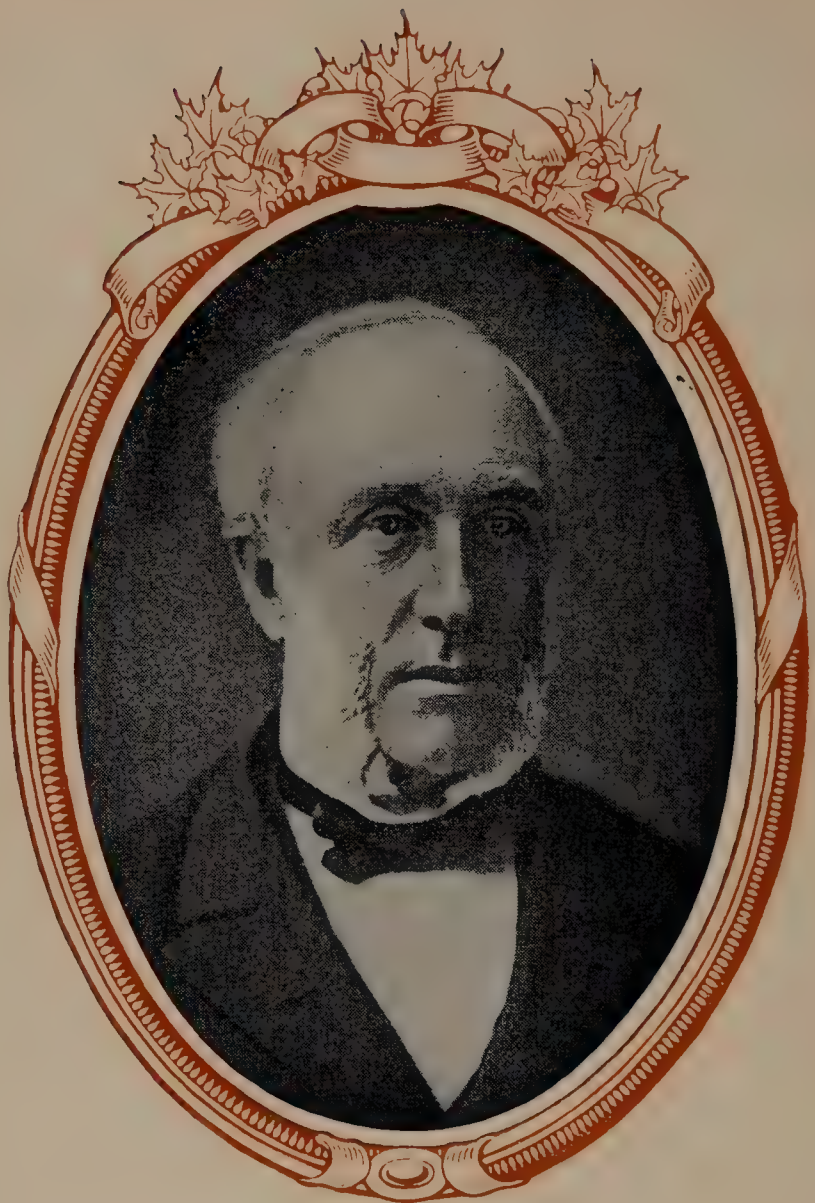


subject of strong criticism and the victim of much misunderstanding. He suffered defeat on occasion, and for two or three years he was forced into the comparative obscurity of opposition. But he came back again to power, as such a man would; and he was still Prime Minister when he died.

Happily for Macdonald, during his visit to England at the time of the Confederation conference, he met and married Miss Bernard, a lady whose devotion and companionship remained with him until he died. It was in the period of his second marriage that the proper meaning of home life came to the statesman. It was during the years of government by his Cabinets that the great railway systems of Canada were created, or encouraged; that the North West Territories became district provinces, and part of the Dominion. And he was in power at that moment when it could first be said—Canada spreads her glory eastward from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic.

Equally at home was this man with the Queen's Court at Windsor, the parliaments at Westminster or Ottawa, or the diplomatic officers at Washington. He arranged treaties and made men Governors of provinces. Queen Victoria knighted him, and gave him many honours. He lived greatly, as the head of a vast country and a great people, and after seventy-five years, he died, Prime Minister of Canada, a poor man, greatly beloved.

George Brown



George Brown

1818 - 1880

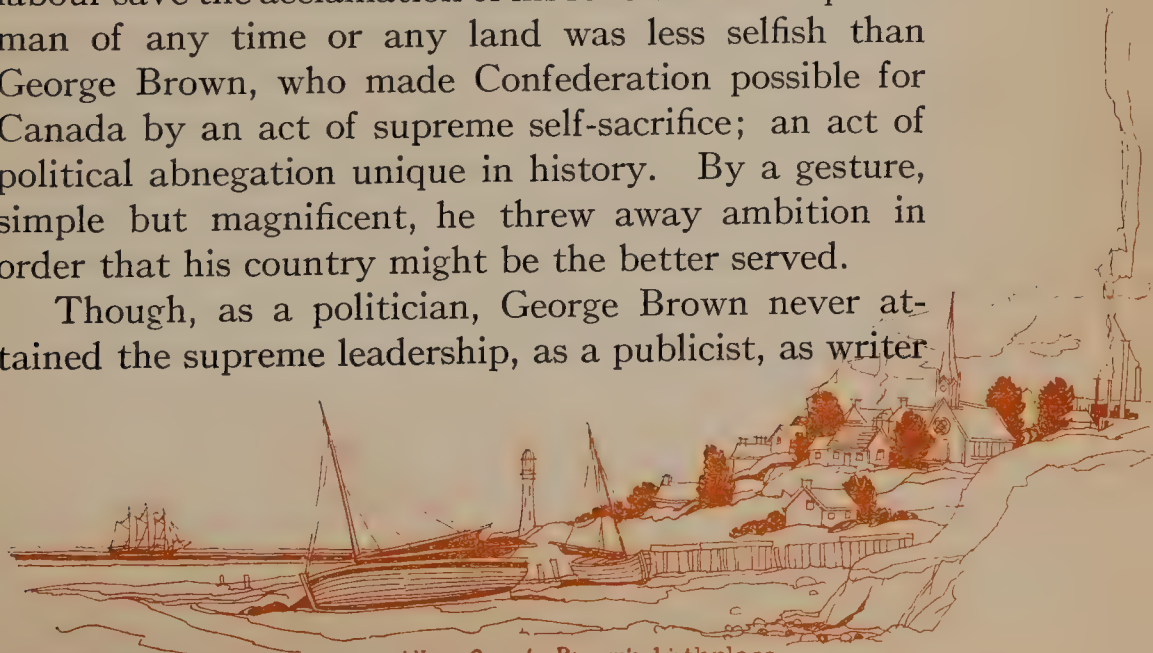
George Brown

THE life story of George Brown is a compound of tragedy and heroism, of pathos and sorrow intermingled with serene happiness, high endeavour and splendid achievement. He was a great man, and a great citizen; a politician strong of purpose and in character incorruptible; steadfast and of unconquerable courage. Yet history discloses him as a statesman who failed to attain that zenith of power and position which seemed his political heritage.

It may be that those accidents of circumstance we sometimes call luck conspired to prevent him from obtaining a position of political omnipotence—or it may have been some little kink of weakness in his apparently immaculate mentality—but the fact remains, George Brown never really acted as Prime Minister of Canada.

He lived a life of unremitting endeavour in the service of Canada and her people; he worked unselfishly, spurning reward and accepting no recompense for his labour save the acclamation of his followers. No public man of any time or any land was less selfish than George Brown, who made Confederation possible for Canada by an act of supreme self-sacrifice; an act of political abnegation unique in history. By a gesture, simple but magnificent, he threw away ambition in order that his country might be the better served.

Though, as a politician, George Brown never attained the supreme leadership, as a publicist, as writer

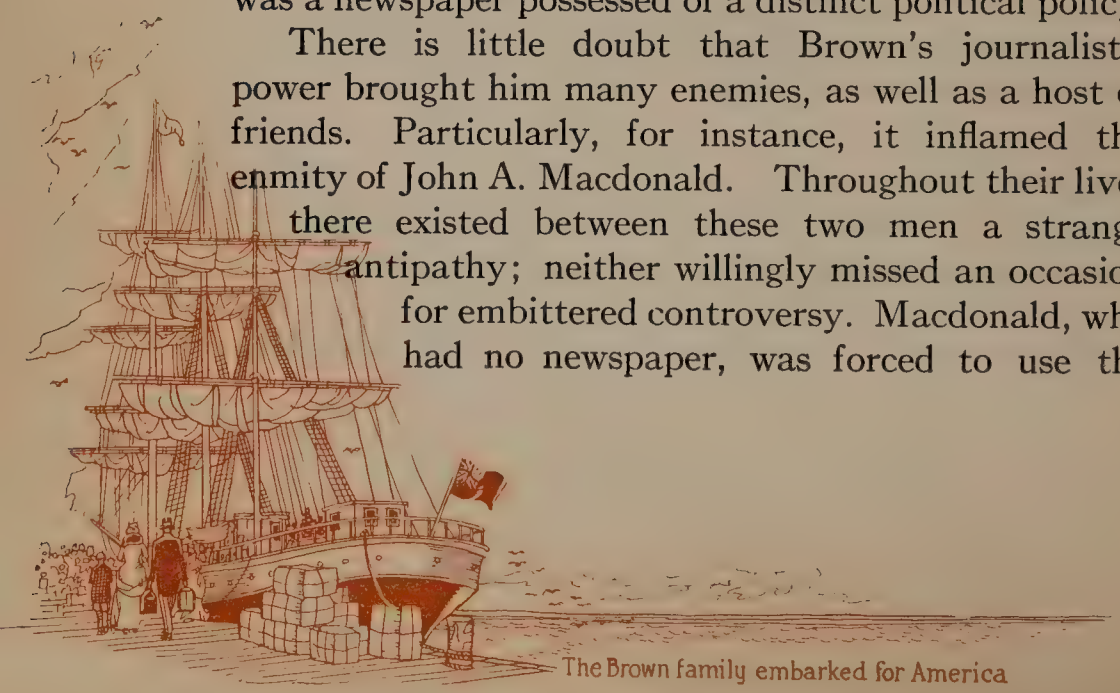


Alloa, George Brown's birthplace

and journalist and editor, in all Canada there was, in his time, no man who was his superior in influence. As owner and editor of the Toronto *Globe* he occupied a position of commanding power in Ontario. He was exempt from the necessity of political office, even of parliamentary membership; his position was one of splendid independence. In or out of office, even in or out of Parliament, he could still, through the columns of his newspaper, affect the opinions of vast numbers of Canadian people. His political opponents had more reason to fear him as he sat in his editorial chair, than when he stood fronting them on the floor of the House.

The immense advantage possessed by a politician who is also an editor is obvious; the dual position gives a man a double chance. Such a man can say things at night *viva voce*, and say those same things again (perhaps with embellishment or correction) next morning in print. Though George Brown was scrupulously honest as an editor, he was a man of strong opinions and pronounced views. He would naturally conceive it his duty to attack, by the printed paragraph, just as vigorously as by the spoken sentence; for the *Globe* was a newspaper possessed of a distinct political policy.

There is little doubt that Brown's journalistic power brought him many enemies, as well as a host of friends. Particularly, for instance, it inflamed the enmity of John A. Macdonald. Throughout their lives there existed between these two men a strange antipathy; neither willingly missed an occasion for embittered controversy. Macdonald, who had no newspaper, was forced to use the



The Brown family embarked for America

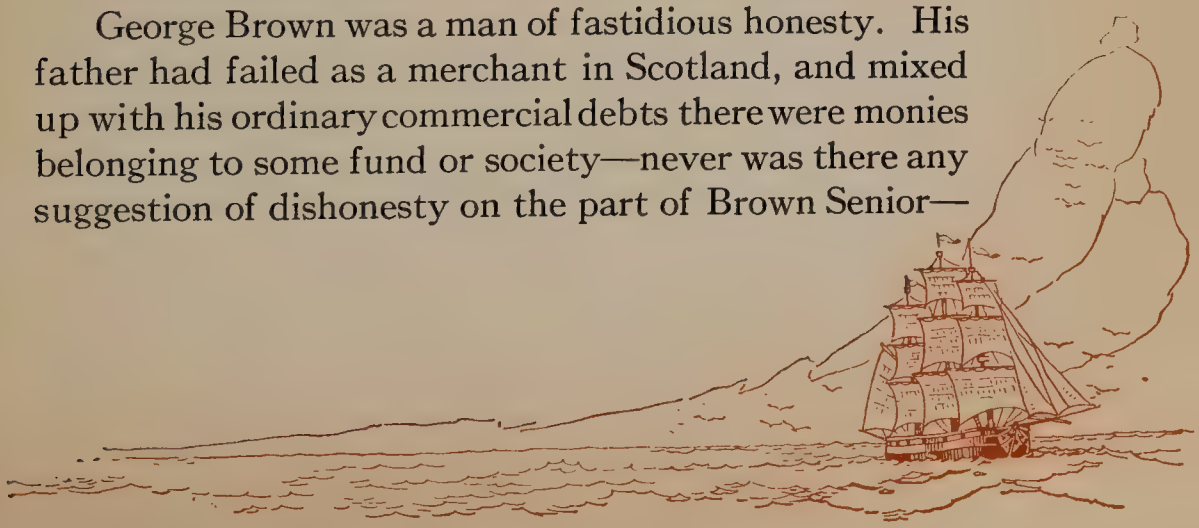
platform, or the floor of the House; Brown retaliated from his editorial chair, the platform—or both—indiscriminately. It was a very bitter and a very terrible hatred, this hatred between these two great public men; its influence was devastating; devastating not only to the men themselves, and to the parties they controlled, but to the Dominion.

George Brown would have been a greater political leader had he not been, primarily, a great editor, and the owner of a great newspaper. He served Canada according to his supreme instinct of patriotism, but he gave to the Toronto *Globe* the service a father gives to his son.

One imagines that in the beginning Brown entered politics from the point of view of a journalist. It was a thing he, as the editor of his paper, was bound to do; he was forced to identify himself with the life of the people he desired to serve, commercially and journalistically. He had to make his paper interesting and influential, just as surely as he had to make it produce money for the Brown family.

He was a man of strong convictions, this George Brown. He hated slavery and he hated the anti-British feeling then prevalent in New York. He hated poverty, and his father's debts; and the cloud which hung over him, when he first came to Toronto, because of his father's debts.

George Brown was a man of fastidious honesty. His father had failed as a merchant in Scotland, and mixed up with his ordinary commercial debts there were monies belonging to some fund or society—never was there any suggestion of dishonesty on the part of Brown Senior—

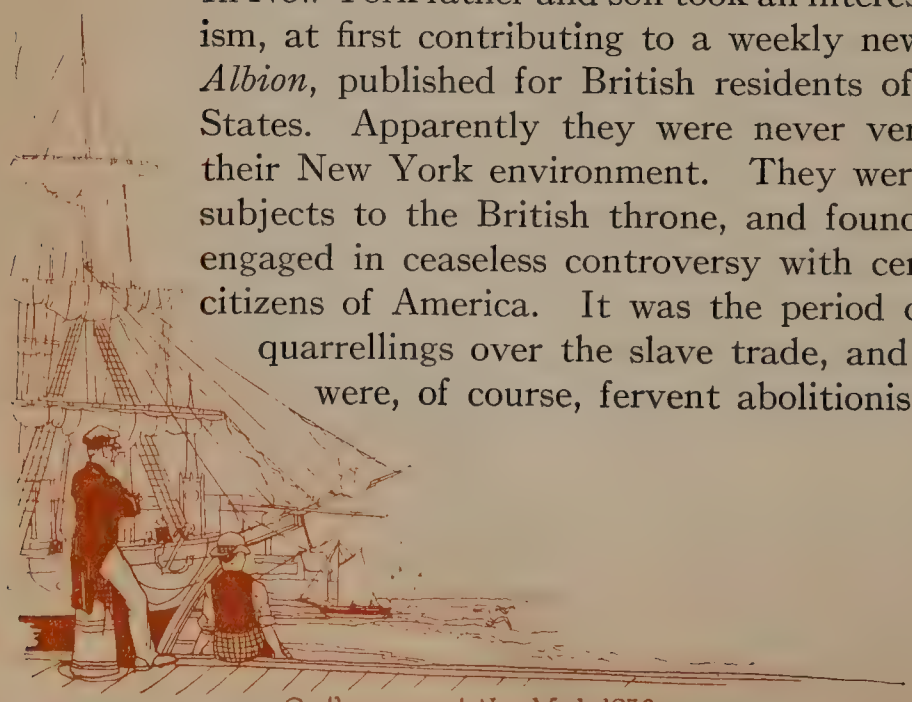


but there was some sort of commercial and financial mix-up. A mix-up which caused George a great deal of suffering, but eventually gave him the opportunity of delivering a most moving, human speech; a speech seldom equalled for vigorous defence and simple eloquence.

All these things contributed to the mentality of George Brown. First he had to make a livelihood, next he had to pay his father's debts, then he had to enter the public life of Canada—a newcomer, a Scotsman, the proprietor of a newly printed sheet published in Toronto, he had to enter the public life of Canada.

George Brown was born at Alloa, a port on the Forth River, thirty-five miles inward from Edinburgh, in November, 1818. His mother was a MacKenzie of Stornoway; his father Peter Brown, merchant and contractor, a man of substance. George was educated at the High School and the Southern Academy in Edinburgh. The atmosphere of his early home life was of a strictly religious nature; in politics the Browns had for generations been strong Liberals.

In 1838 a commercial catastrophe occurred which led Peter Brown to emigrate with his family to America. In New York father and son took an interest in journalism, at first contributing to a weekly newspaper, the *Albion*, published for British residents of the United States. Apparently they were never very happy in their New York environment. They were very loyal subjects to the British throne, and found themselves engaged in ceaseless controversy with certain critical citizens of America. It was the period of the bitter quarrellings over the slave trade, and the Browns were, of course, fervent abolitionists; tempers



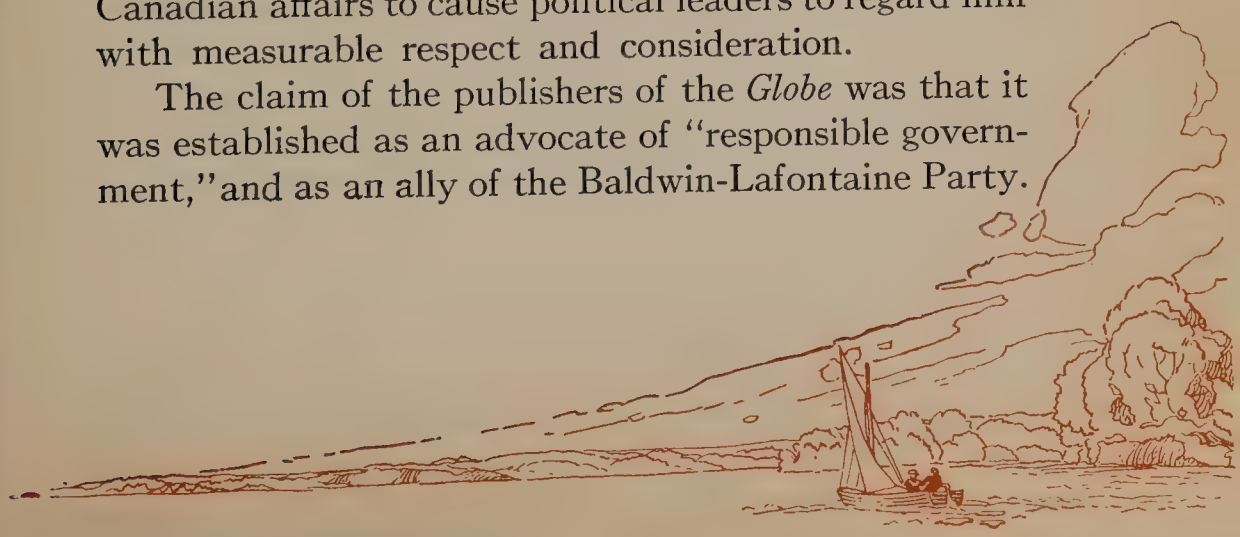
On the quay at New York, 1838

ran high. In '42 the Browns established a newspaper of their own—the *British Chronicle* designed to interest Scottish readers throughout America and the Canadas. It was in connection with the work of this paper that George Brown first visited Toronto in 1843.

Shortly after this initial visit, and because of the promising conditions existing in Canada for the publication of a patriotic journal, the Browns came to Toronto. They abandoned the production of the *British Chronicle*, and in '43 issued the first copy of the *Banner*, a weekly journal, mainly religious in character, but with a certain political flavour.

Naturally the early years of George Brown's Canadian life were almost entirely absorbed in the interesting work of hoisting the *Banner* to success, and so providing for his family a sufficient income. At first this interesting journal professed to be independent of any political party, though—probably as a reaction from their experiences in New York—the Browns seemed to have adopted an almost Conservative bias. But the local politics of Canada, free of any hint of American Anglophobia, quickly enabled these two Scotsmen, in whom Liberalism was an inherited instinct, to return to the political prejudices of their ancestors. In the month of March, 1844, the *Globe* newspaper was established; and with the publication of its first number George Brown became a force sufficiently influential in Canadian affairs to cause political leaders to regard him with measurable respect and consideration.

The claim of the publishers of the *Globe* was that it was established as an advocate of "responsible government," and as an ally of the Baldwin-Lafontaine Party.

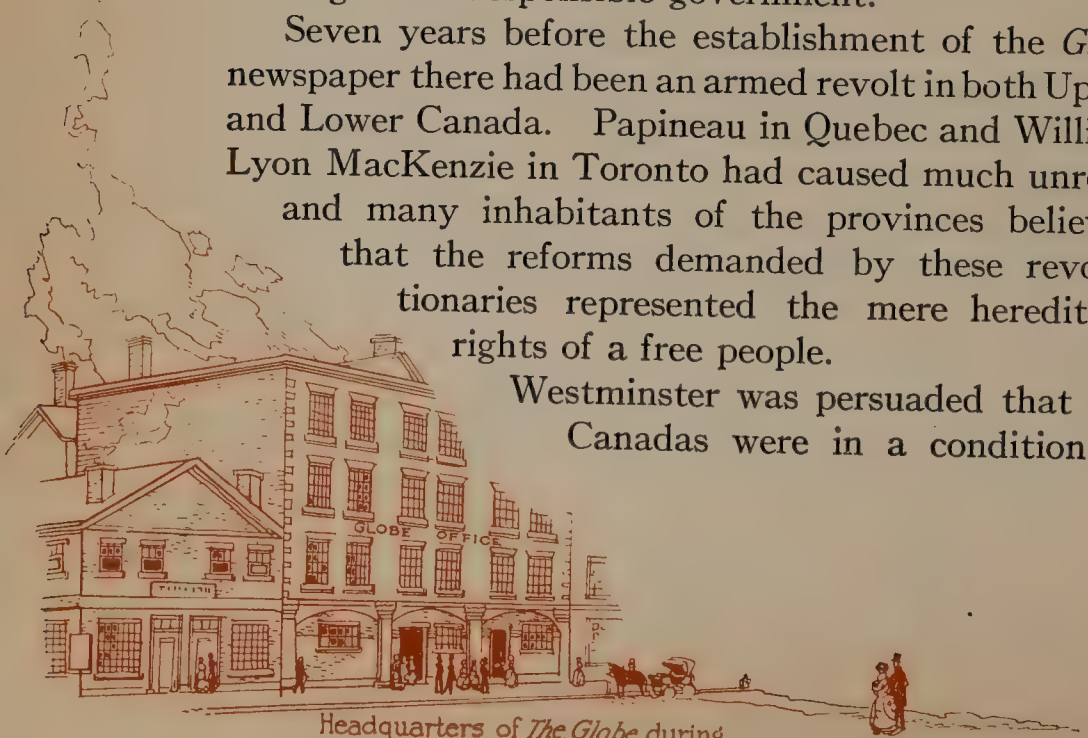


Those were stirring days in the old Canadas. The days of the British and French factions, of unrest, of the prevalence of vast vested interests, and of rebellion and the prospect of rebellion. Southward our neighbour, the United States of America, was a sparsely settled wilderness, each of whose towns and villages and hamlets contained a strong proportion of citizens who hated the British. The question of the slave trade embittered various factions according to their inborn irradicable prejudices, hereditary influences or the extent of their possessions in flocks of valuable human slaves. The memory of the ghastly atrocities perpetrated by certain degenerate Americans on British Empire Loyalists still remained in the hearts of those Loyalists, now happily settled in various districts of Upper Canada.

The conditions of life were still primitive, and the Canadas were more or less in a rudimentary stage; they were still counted merely a British Colony. Parliament at Westminster had not yet been convinced that the Western Colony was in a condition sufficiently advanced to be granted responsible government.

Seven years before the establishment of the *Globe* newspaper there had been an armed revolt in both Upper and Lower Canada. Papineau in Quebec and William Lyon MacKenzie in Toronto had caused much unrest, and many inhabitants of the provinces believed that the reforms demanded by these revolutionaries represented the mere hereditary rights of a free people.

Westminster was persuaded that the Canadas were in a condition of



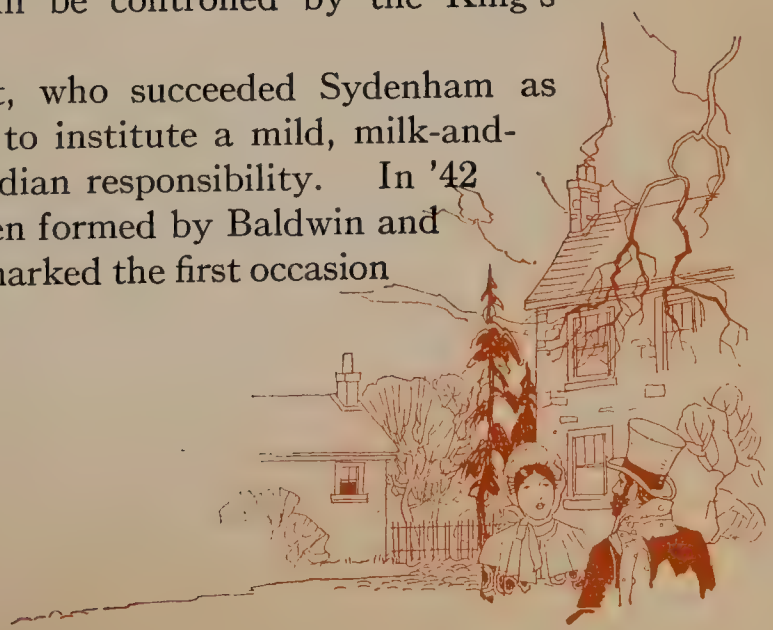
Headquarters of *The Globe* during Brown's editorship

seething discontent. The "Colony" represented a considerable expense in regard to naval and military protection, and there was a feeling among certain "little Englanders" in the Old Country that the sooner these Canadas were cut adrift the better.

But in its dogged, incomprehensible, unswerving fashion, the British Government persisted. Various Prime Ministers sent out various Governors, and frequently these Governors were entirely unsuitable officials. A few—Simcoe, Durham and one or two others—had been really good men; good statesmen and good governors. But too frequently Waterloo Generals, possibly with some claim on Wellington, were selected; or titled nonentities who had married daughters of dukes. Many of these great unfortunates merely made for a continuance of the people's unrest.

The Governors from England were put in authority, almost absolute authority, over the two millions or so people who in those days made up the population of the two Canadas. Lord Sydenham, a Governor of some intelligence and undoubted strength of character, had introduced—it would be almost fair to write *forced* —the union of the two Canadas. But this autocratic Governor had admitted that while he was eager to obtain the support of a cabinet of the united Canadas, the country must still be controlled by the King's advisors in England.

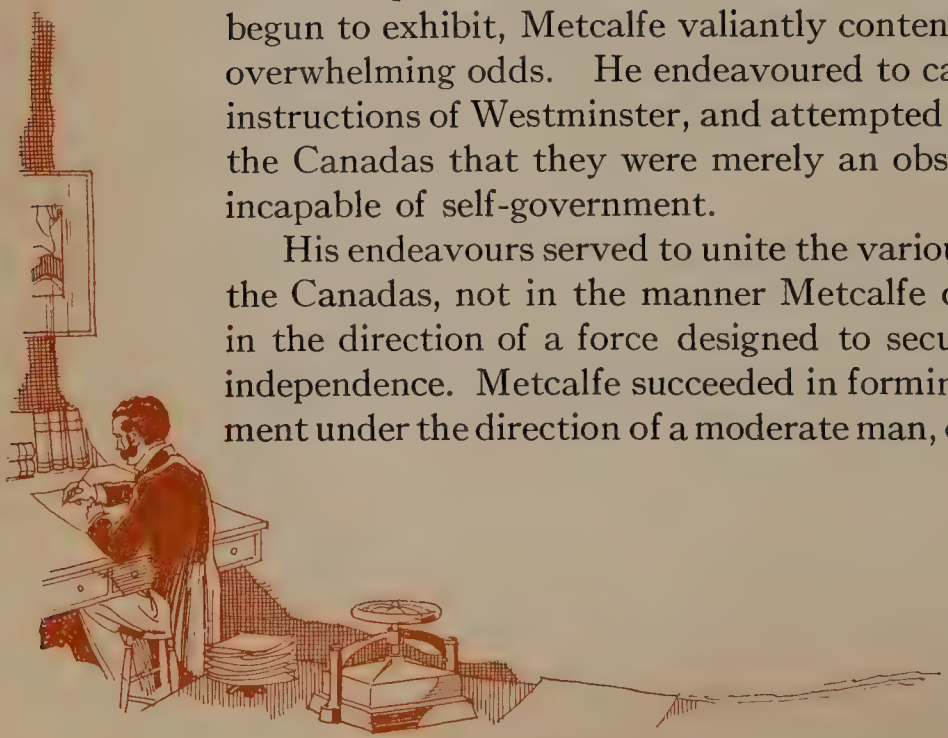
Sir Charles Bagot, who succeeded Sydenham as Governor, attempted to institute a mild, milk-and-water system of Canadian responsibility. In '42 a government had been formed by Baldwin and Lafontaine, and this marked the first occasion



when the French party had been permitted to hold office in the united parliament of Upper and Lower Canada. The innovation was regarded as a revolutionary measure by the Government at Westminster, and with profound dissatisfaction by a large number of the members of the Canadian House of Assembly. All members other than the French and British Liberals refused to take part in government. Bagot's hopes of achieving unity ended in the creation of a greater discord, and it is on record that the disappointment killed him. Certainly in '43 he died, a broken-hearted man, the third victim, it is believed, of that monstrous political morass, the Government of Canada. Durham and Sydenham had already been killed in attempting to build a path through this dreary death swamp, and a year or two later, still another Governor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, was to become the last sacrifice to this terrible political situation.

Metcalfe had been sent by England to clear up the "mess" which the home authorities thought Bagot, by his fanatical radicalism, had created. Filled with high ideals, and a certain sympathy toward the eagerness for self-expression and self-government Canadians had begun to exhibit, Metcalfe valiantly contended against overwhelming odds. He endeavoured to carry out the instructions of Westminster, and attempted to persuade the Canadas that they were merely an obscure colony incapable of self-government.

His endeavours served to unite the various parties of the Canadas, not in the manner Metcalfe desired, but in the direction of a force designed to secure absolute independence. Metcalfe succeeded in forming a government under the direction of a moderate man, of moderate

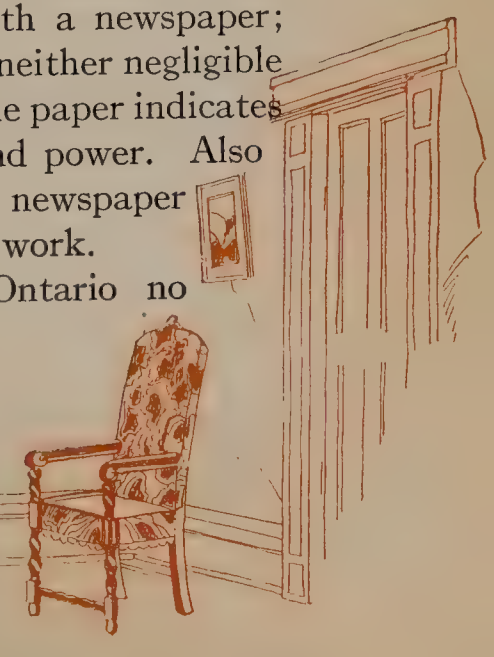


A journalist at work in the old *Globe* office

ability: W. H. Draper. But this Draper Government proved incompetent and impotent in the face of the fierce opposition of almost all the intelligent members of the House. A general election was forced, and by superhuman efforts, and the employment of corrupt practices, and the illicit use of machinery at the disposal of the Government, Metcalfe's party won by a small majority. The effort killed him, for he returned to England a year later, and died, a newly created peer, but a broken man.

This profoundly unsatisfactory election occurred in 1844, the year of the birth of George Brown's *Globe* newspaper. And, by considering the political situation at that time, it is not difficult to imagine why this descendant of the old Scottish covenanters should ordain that the first object of his paper should be the establishment of a responsible government, coupled with unswerving loyalty to Great Britain. George Brown was a hard worker. He built up the circulation of the *Globe* with a remarkable speed. The paper was established as a weekly journal with a circulation of a few hundreds. A little later it was issued three times weekly, and its circulation reached six thousand; eventually it was produced, in October, 1853, as a daily paper.

To-day these circulation figures may appear trifling, if not negligible, when associated with a newspaper; but in Toronto in the '40's, they were neither negligible nor trifling. The gradual growth of the paper indicates the steady increase of its influence and power. Also it indicates that George Brown, as a newspaper owner, was no sluggard in his office work.



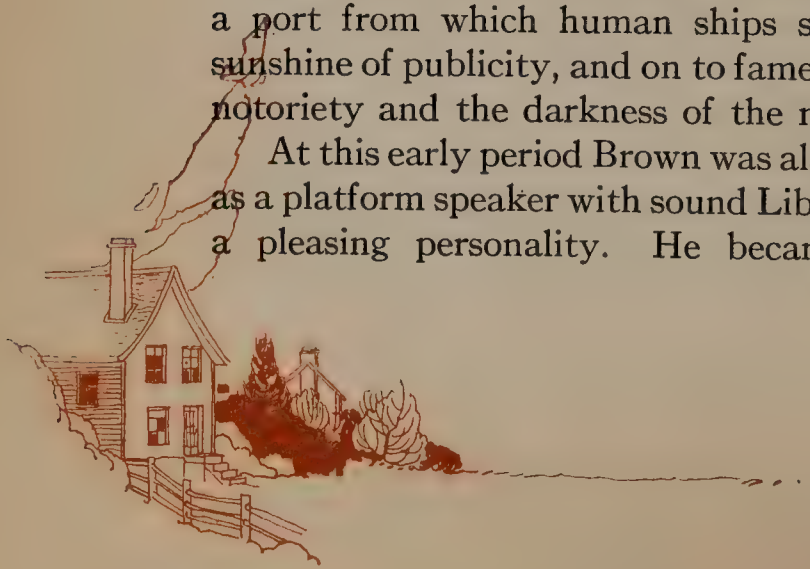
In those days there were in Ontario no

railways; indeed there were no roads. Communication was a painful affair. It was an effort to make the tremendous journey from Toronto to Port Credit. For that matter a journey from one end of King Street to the other was no pleasant affair on a muddy day. So that in the mere detail of the distribution of four or five thousand copies, the life of a newspaper proprietor was not a very happy one. In the detail of gathering news it was even worse. There were no press cables, telephones, tape machines, press agencies; instead the empty page, the frantic editor, the reporters, the paste pot and the scissors.

In the course of building up the *Globe*, George Brown must have travelled through all those parts of Ontario already rescued from the primeval forest. In the course of those journeys he met each and every class of Upper Canadian. He got to know the country and the needs of the country; the people and the needs of the people. A magnificent education, which the politician-publicist found of inestimable value.

Also in those early journalistic days it was necessary for the young editor to discourse with every interesting man of the province. He would meet men of every party on neutral ground, every distinguished visitor, every aspirant to distinction or preferment or fame. In those days the newspaper was a great power; it was not merely a meeting place, it was also, as it were, a port from which human ships sailed forth in the sunshine of publicity, and on to fame; or to malodorous notoriety and the darkness of the night.

At this early period Brown was also becoming known as a platform speaker with sound Liberal principles, and a pleasing personality. He became identified with

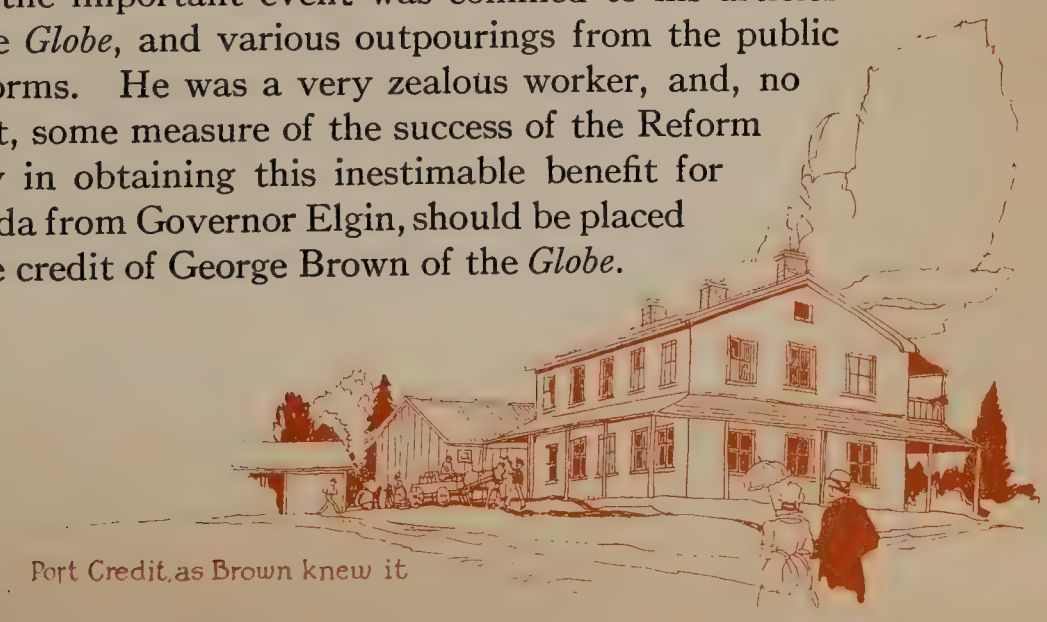


numerous local institutions—in fact he became well known locally as a public man.

The *Globe* had long become identified with the Reform Party. Brown attacked those whose policies and ideals were opposed to his own, and supported those with whom he found himself in agreement. His journalistic style was typical of a period remarkable for an astounding length of sentence, and a certain dignity, completely lost in these days of stop-press news and tabloid views. His speeches were carefully prepared, and delivered with a certain decision which usually carried conviction. Usually he appealed to the brains of his hearers rather than their hearts, though on at least one or two occasions he was able to rise to certain heights of eloquence, and to produce an impression of profound emotion on hard and critical audiences.

He was a tall, handsome man of perfect physical proportions, also he had a certain appearance of greatness. In the parliaments of his time there was never a finer looking man, nor one who possessed a greater atmosphere of distinction.

Canada achieved the honour and responsibility of self-government in '49. The story of Lord Elgin's action on that memorable occasion has been chronicled elsewhere in this volume. George Brown's connection with the important event was confined to his articles in the *Globe*, and various outpourings from the public platforms. He was a very zealous worker, and, no doubt, some measure of the success of the Reform Party in obtaining this inestimable benefit for Canada from Governor Elgin, should be placed to the credit of George Brown of the *Globe*.



Port Credit, as Brown knew it

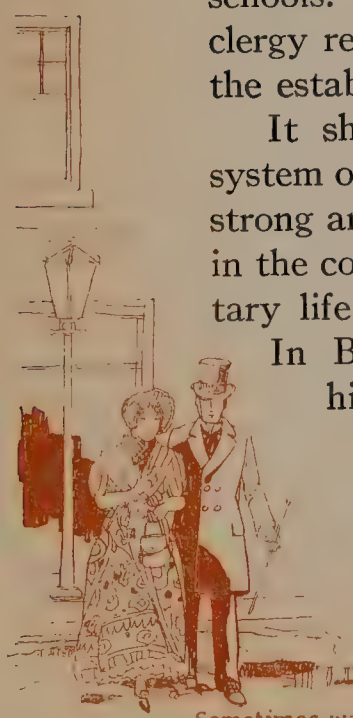
Not the least amazing outcome of this establishment of responsible government was that it seemed to break the hearts, and turn the heads, of the leaders of the Tory Party. The idea became current that England had abandoned Canada; that the government in future would be in the hands of the French-Canadians, rebels, and so on. A great petition was actually drawn up by some of the most prominent English-speaking citizens, openly and strongly advocating union with the United States.

Lord Elgin naturally opposed this movement with all his strength, and in this opposition received the fullest measure of support from Brown and his newspaper. Ultimately, of course, this distemper was cured, and the agitation crushed out of existence.

Two years after this, in '51, Brown entered Parliament as a member of the Reform Party. The most interesting items of his first election address showed that the young politician advocated the building of a railway from Quebec to Windsor; reciprocity with the Maritime Provinces and the United States; representation by population; and the establishment of free schools. He advocated the secularization of the old clergy reserves, the proceeds of this measure to go to the establishment of free education.

It should never be forgotten that the splendid system of education now in existence owes much to the strong and consistent advocacy of George Brown, both in the columns of his newspaper, and in his parliamentary life.

In Brown's first parliament he speedily proved himself a sturdy critic even of the leaders of his

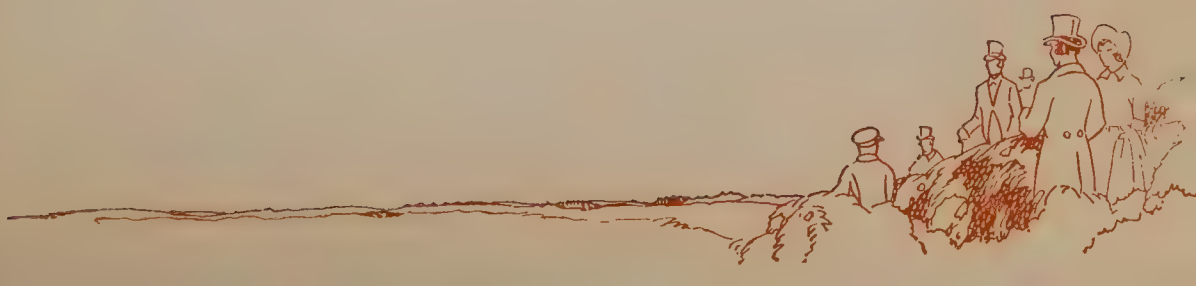


Sometimes walking on King Street, was an adventure in mud

own party; he speedily became accustomed to the House. By '53, when the *Globe* became a daily paper, "Representation by population, justice for Upper Canada" had become a sort of editorial slogan. It was, as it were, a headline in the published policy of the paper—when it achieved its new status as a daily. Other planks in the editorial policy were, national education, and prohibition.

This question of proportional representation became, for a short period, almost a political obsession with George Brown. The population of Upper Canada now exceeded that of the lower province, yet the number of representatives admitted to Parliament remained the same—equal for each province. For years the reverse had been the case—the French had outnumbered the English prodigiously—but those days had gone forever. Brown insisted on the immediate necessity for reform, and he continued to insist. His continued demand for a solution of this problem, for which there seemed no solution, was undoubtedly one of the contributing factors to the ultimate institution of Confederation.

By '56, Brown and Macdonald were in the thick of their personal fight. John A. Macdonald was, in all but name, the leader of the party in power. Brown was his chief and most exasperating opponent. On one occasion, Macdonald, stung beyond endurance, turned on his tormentor and made charges against his personal honour. Several years before, Brown had been a member of a committee, formed to enquire into the condition of the provincial penitentiary. Macdonald now charged his enemy with having given false testimony at



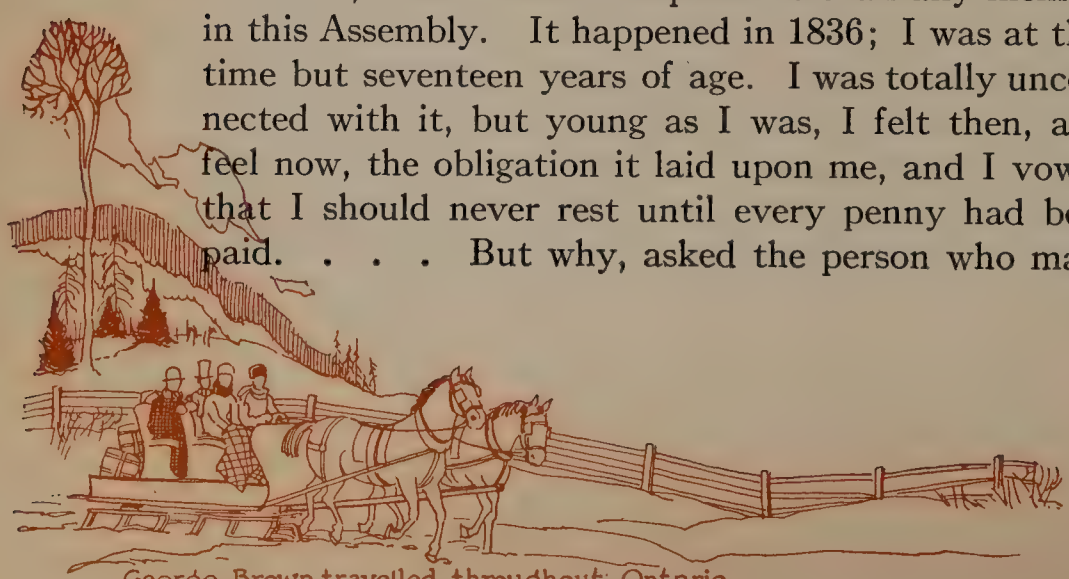
this enquiry, with having suborned convicts to commit perjury, and obtained the pardon of murderers to induce them to give false evidence.

Naturally Brown indignantly denied all these charges, and demanded a committee of inquiry. Eventually the matter was cleared up, and George Brown emerged, completely exonerated. The incident was one of the great parliamentary errors in Macdonald's career, though it must be admitted that it was seldom the great leader allowed his quick temper to run away with him.

A year or two after this unsavoury incident, another personal attack was made on the honour of George Brown. In 1858, a Mr. Powell, member for Carlton, publicly accused the editor of having been a defaulter in Scotland.

This accusation enabled Brown to make public his reply to a half formed accusation, which had caused him much anger, and considerable pain, for a number of years. In the course of his reply it transpired that George Brown had made himself responsible for, and had repaid, debts incurred by his father.

"Debts, sir," he said in the House, "which I was no more bound in law, than any gentleman who hears me. For the painful transactions to which I have been forced to allude, I am no more responsible than any member in this Assembly. It happened in 1836; I was at that time but seventeen years of age. I was totally unconnected with it, but young as I was, I felt then, as I feel now, the obligation it laid upon me, and I vowed that I should never rest until every penny had been paid. . . . But why, asked the person who made

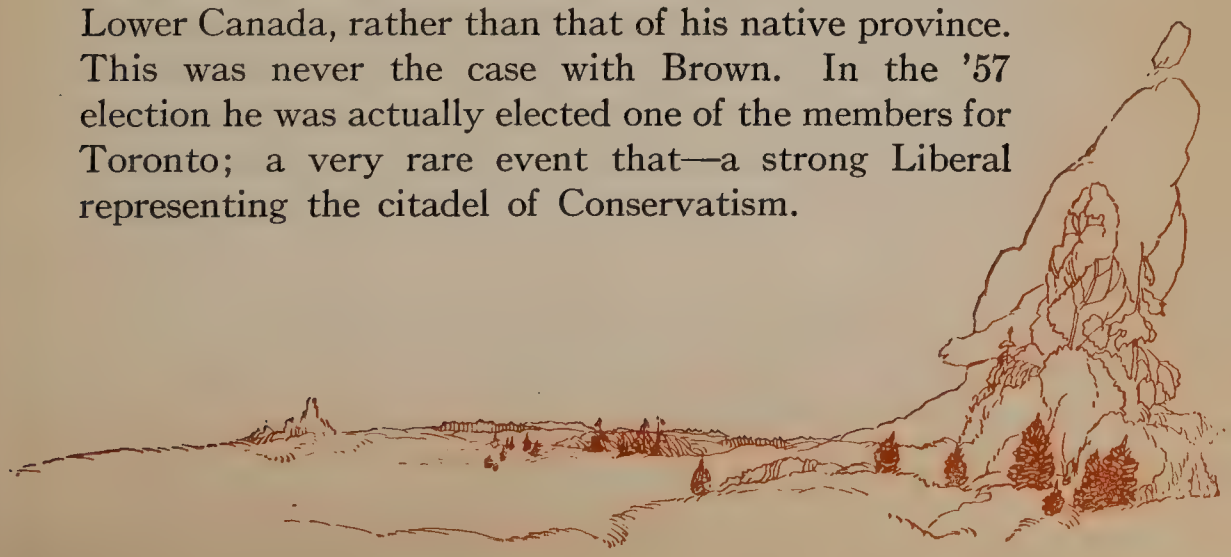


George Brown travelled throughout Ontario

the charge, has he sat silent under it? Why, if the thing is false, has he endured it so many years? What sir, free myself from blame by one so dear? Say, 'It was not I who was in fault, it was my father?' Rather would I have lost my right arm than utter such a word! With a full knowledge of all that has passed, and all the consequences that have flowed from a day of weakness, I will say that a more honest man does not breathe the air of Heaven; that no son feels prouder of his father than I do to-day; and that I would have submitted to the obloquy and reproach of his every act, not fifteen years but fifty—aye, have gone down to the grave with the cold shade of the world upon me, rather than that one of his grey hairs should have been injured."

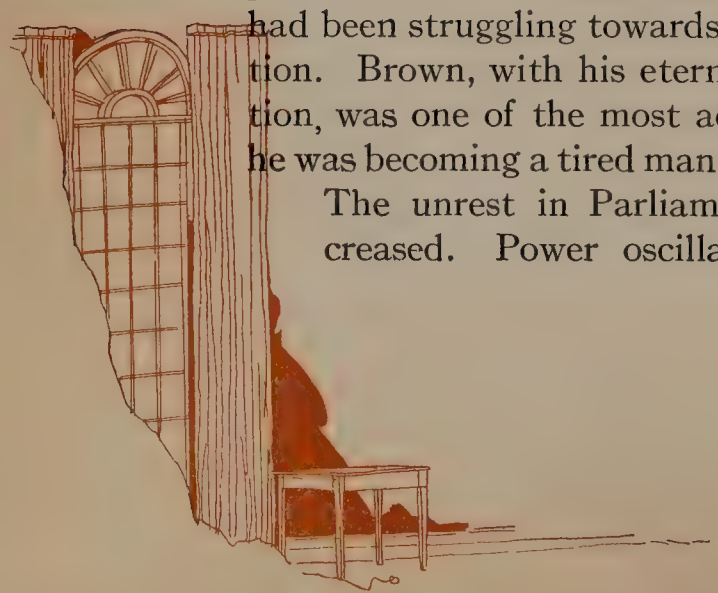
It was a really noble effort; too long, unfortunately, for full reproduction here; but the immediate effect of its delivery was to put Brown on a vastly higher pinnacle of popularity in the House, and throughout the country. Instead of bringing him discredit, the incident greatly enhanced his credit, and increased his power.

Amidst all these bickerings and shoutings and unrest, George Brown continued to hammer away at his representation by population. He became recognized as the great champion of Upper Canada rights. For many years Macdonald rested on the support of Lower Canada, rather than that of his native province. This was never the case with Brown. In the '57 election he was actually elected one of the members for Toronto; a very rare event that—a strong Liberal representing the citadel of Conservatism.



In '58 Brown upset the Macdonald administration, in a sort of snap division, on the question of the site of the seat of government. It had been inconvenient—absurdly inconvenient—to keep changing the headquarters from one centre to another, and three or four great cities each thought they had superior claims to selection. At last Macdonald had submitted the problem to Queen Victoria for arbitration. It was in this manner that the choice of Ottawa was made. Brown objected to the reference of the matter to Queen Victoria; he was a great patriot, but a radical also. And he strenuously objected to the selection of any capital, until the problem of proportional representation had been settled. Anyway his vote of censure upset Macdonald, and the Governor-General sent for Brown, as leader of the opposition, to form a government. This incident gave birth to the famous double-shuffle incident—an affair reflecting doubtful credit on a number of people. Brown formed his ministry on the Saturday, and was defeated in the House on the following Monday. He and his colleagues, who had been legally forced to resign their seats in the House on accepting ministerial rank, were thus left in the wilderness.

For several years a large number of prominent people in the Canadas, and the Maritime Provinces, had been struggling towards some system of confederation. Brown, with his eternal proportional representation, was one of the most active in the struggle. But he was becoming a tired man in need of a rest.



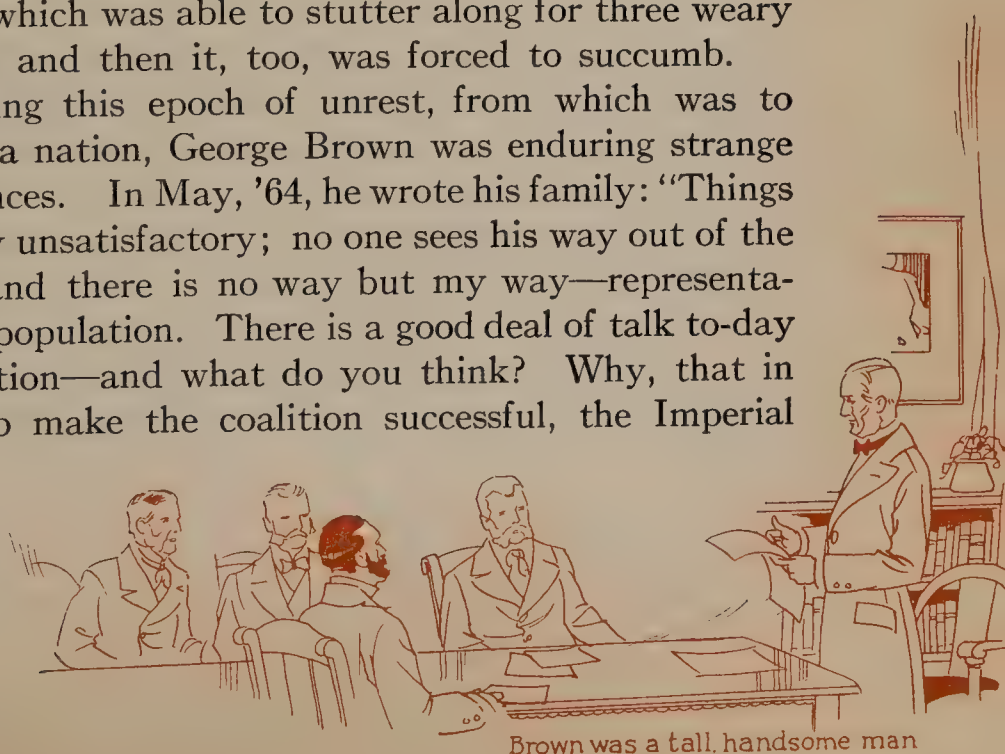
The unrest in Parliament continued, indeed increased. Power oscillated between the parties.

Two general elections were held within two years, and nothing eventuated.

In '62 Brown sailed for Britain. John Sandfield Macdonald had become leader of the Liberals, and he and the *Globe* editor had quarrelled rather severely over the "double majority" question. For several months Brown travelled England and Scotland, discussing Canadian affairs with home authorities. It is interesting to find that, in those days, Brown found the members of the Home Government, with the exception of Gladstone, set upon "The Inter-Colonial Railway, and a grand transit route across the continent."

Returning to Canada, Brown continued his journalistic and public work, but did not re-enter Parliament until the 1863 election. That year found the Sandfield Macdonald Government sadly weakened, and so a general election was held. The Sandfield Macdonald-Dorion combination obtained an unworkable majority, and it resigned early in '64, without awaiting the formal passing of a "want of confidence" motion. The Liberals were succeeded by a ministry formed by John A. Macdonald—the Taché-Macdonald Government—which was able to stutter along for three weary months, and then it, too, was forced to succumb.

During this epoch of unrest, from which was to emerge a nation, George Brown was enduring strange experiences. In May, '64, he wrote his family: "Things are very unsatisfactory; no one sees his way out of the mess—and there is no way but my way—representation by population. There is a good deal of talk to-day of coalition—and what do you think? Why, that in order to make the coalition successful, the Imperial



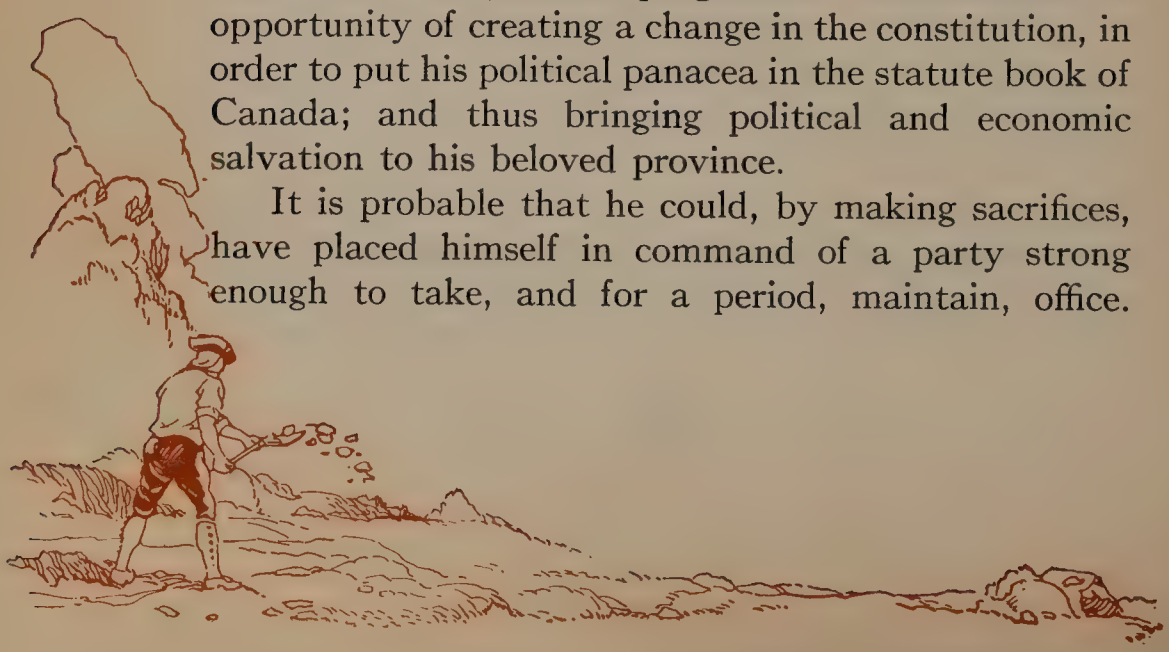
Brown was a tall, handsome man

Government are to offer me the government of one of the British Colonies. I have been gravely asked to-day, by several, if it is true; and whether I would accept. My reply was, I would rather be proprietor of the *Globe* newspaper than be Governor-General of Canada, much less a trumpery little province."

In June, '64, Brown was chairman of a committee appointed to consider the difficulties connected with the government of Canada. That committee brought in a report recommending "a federative system, applied either to Canada alone, or to the whole of British North American Provinces." This report appeared on the day the Taché-Macdonald Government was defeated.

The Governor found it impossible to find any one person, or any combination of persons, strong enough to form a new ministry. It was almost impossible to dissolve the House and indulge in another general election. The frequency of general elections had become almost farcical. George Brown was a great stumbling block. He seemed to have insufficient followers to form a government of his own, but he was decidedly strong enough to prevent the formation of any effective coalition. Brown viewed the deadlock as a possible chance for the passing of his own great representation by population programme. He scented an opportunity of creating a change in the constitution, in order to put his political panacea in the statute book of Canada; and thus bringing political and economic salvation to his beloved province.

It is probable that he could, by making sacrifices, have placed himself in command of a party strong enough to take, and for a period, maintain, office.

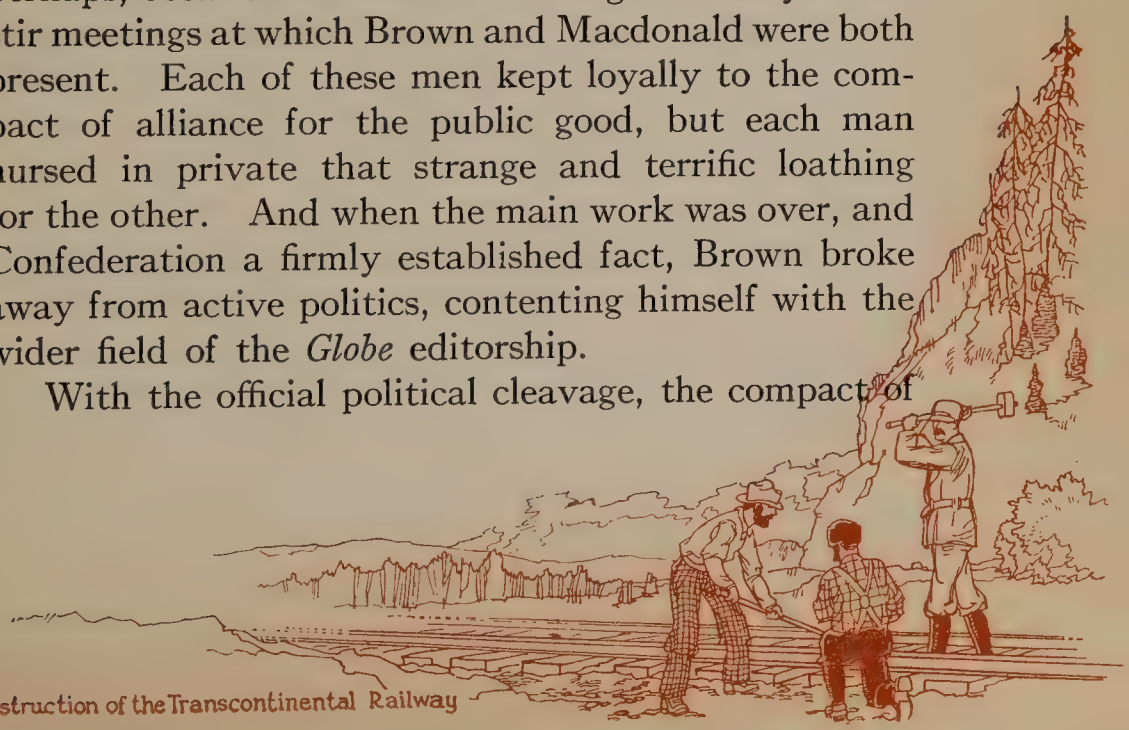


Instead, he made that magnificent gesture of personal renunciation which will make his name famous, and his character revered, throughout our history.

He offered his co-operation, and the co-operation of his friends, to Cartier and his friends in the formation of a coalition party, in order to deal with the political situation of Canada. "Cartier and his friends" indicated John A. Macdonald. The statement meant that Brown placed his personal pride and ambition on the altar of his country, and sacrificed himself in the fire of a burning patriotism. Henceforth he, the strong and domineering leader, would permit himself to be domineered and overshadowed, by the man he hated most in all the world; a man whose character he despised, and whose mode of living he openly and adversely criticized. All this George Brown did for the sake of the political salvation of Canada.

There is no need in this place to go into the story of the long conferences which ultimately led to Confederation. In all of these George Brown played a vigorous and productive part. He and his paper did noble work in the negotiations, and the arrangements. Naturally, perhaps, occasional flickers of flaming animosity would stir meetings at which Brown and Macdonald were both present. Each of these men kept loyally to the compact of alliance for the public good, but each man nursed in private that strange and terrific loathing for the other. And when the main work was over, and Confederation a firmly established fact, Brown broke away from active politics, contenting himself with the wider field of the *Globe* editorship.

With the official political cleavage, the compact of



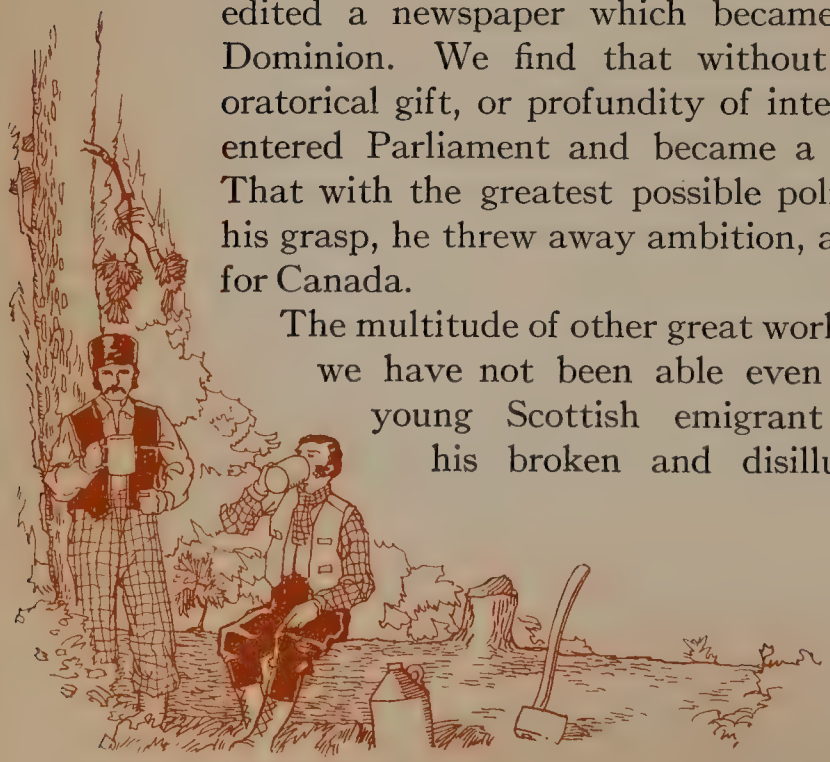
Construction of the Transcontinental Railway

alliance was also broken, and the old foes once more faced each other in the old, ferocious game of vituperative attack.

George Brown was concerned with a vast amount of creative work, quite apart from his achievements in connection with Confederation. His association with the *Globe* gave him an extraordinary power of accomplishment. His philanthropic efforts were enormous, and he did magnificent work in connection with the slave trade. The powerful influence of his paper materially strengthened official Canada in the matter of the North West Territories, and the construction of the Transcontinental Railway. In these chapters we are not concerned with every achievement, great or small, that our heroes accomplish. It is rather with their character that we deal.

Thus we find Brown surmounting vast difficulties —difficulties similar to those which confront ninety-nine out of every hundred young Canadians—and becoming, commercially, a successful man. We find that he, unaided and without capital, founded and edited a newspaper which became a power in the Dominion. We find that without any outstanding oratorical gift, or profundity of intellectual genius, he entered Parliament and became a recognized leader. That with the greatest possible political prize within his grasp, he threw away ambition, and suffered nobly, for Canada.

The multitude of other great works he accomplished we have not been able even to mention. The young Scottish emigrant who came with his broken and disillusioned father to

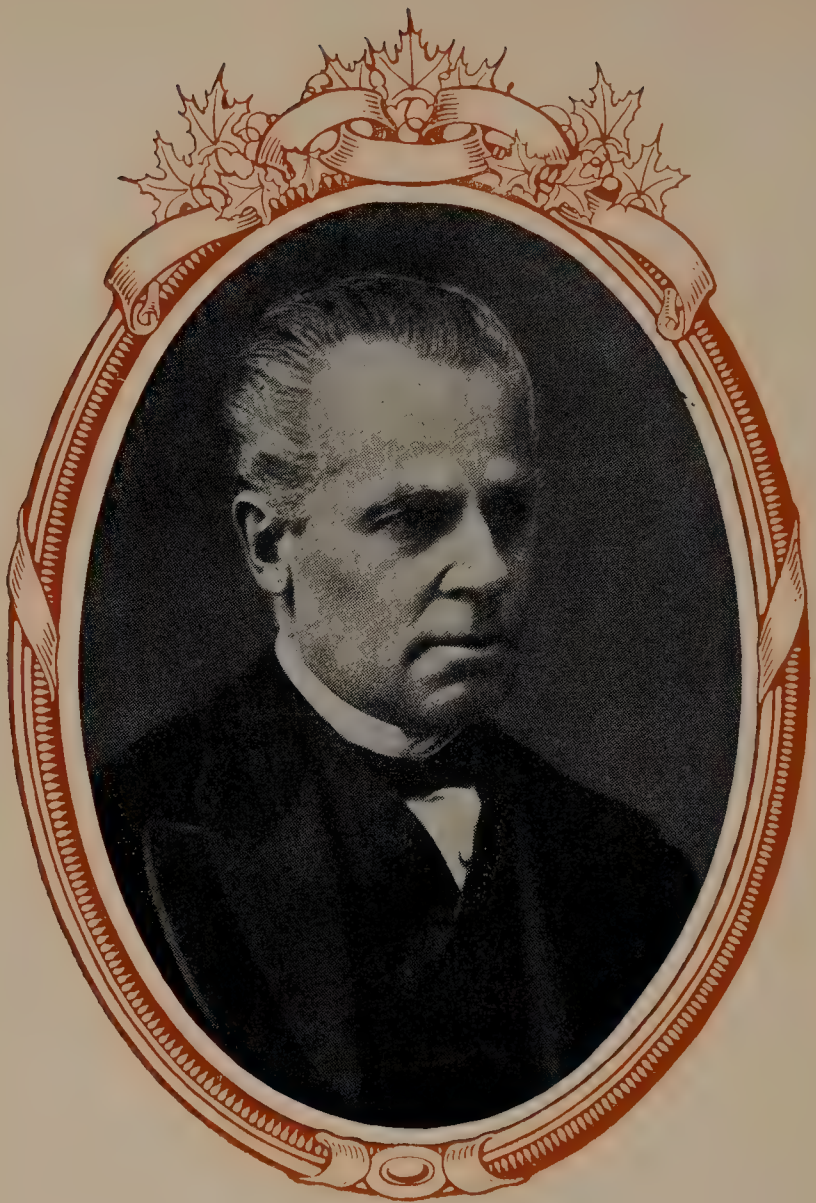


Upper Canada backwoodsmen typical of Brown's period

America, and then to Canada, became a great citizen of the Dominion, and his record constitutes a magnificent chapter in her history.

He died piteously, assassinated by a demented dram drinker whom he had frequently befriended, and, out of charity, employed. Sixty-two years George Brown lived, strenuously; happily sometimes; honestly always: a very good man, and a Great Canadian.

Sir Georges Cartier



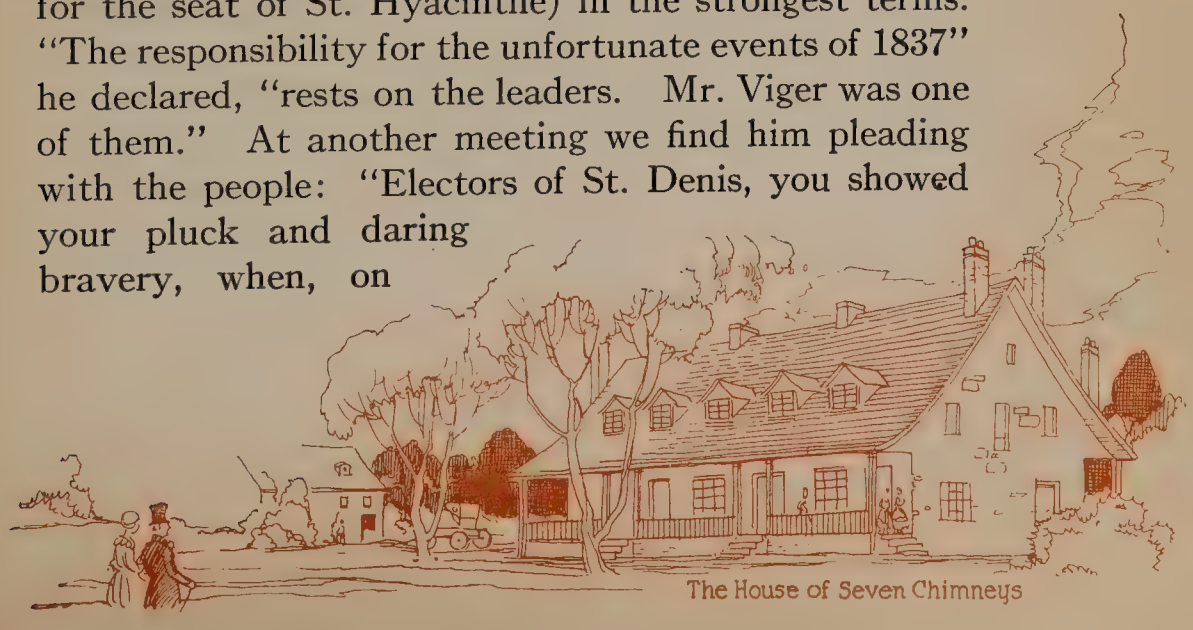
Sir Georges Cartier

1814 - 1873

Sir Georges Cartier

IT would be easy to write of Georges Etienne Cartier that he was a man possessed of vast mental inconsistency; easy and absurd. Cartier became a great statesman, but always he remained a poet; it was his attitude in regard to the Rebellion of 1837 that suggests incongruities. For it is mere history that, influenced by that fascinating personage, Louis Joseph Papineau, and his lieutenant, D. B. Viger, Cartier once was a rebel fighting against the Crown.

The Rebellion was crushed out—after considerable bloodshed—and Cartier narrowly escaped the gallows. He did suffer proscription, and for a considerable period, the mental tortures of exile. For his part in this uprising Cartier afterwards blamed Papineau and Viger, whom he bitterly denounced. He charged these two leaders with "taking advantage of his want of experience" in enrolling him under the flag of revolt. Yet he was not above making certain political capital out of the part he played in those troublous days. At one meeting he denounced Viger (whom he was opposing for the seat of St. Hyacinthe) in the strongest terms. "The responsibility for the unfortunate events of 1837" he declared, "rests on the leaders. Mr. Viger was one of them." At another meeting we find him pleading with the people: "Electors of St. Denis, you showed your pluck and daring bravery, when, on



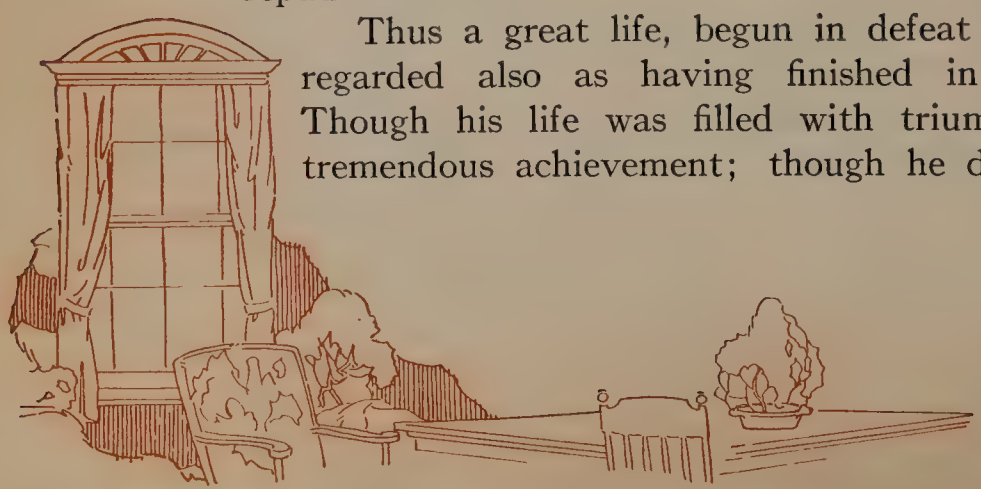
The House of Seven Chimneys

November 22nd, 1837, with a few muskets, hayforks, and sticks as weapons, you conquered Gore's troops. I was with you, and I have not been found, I think, wanting in courage."

Thus he first acknowledged his error in taking part in the revolt, and the next moment made political use of that same error. Throughout his career this man was accustomed to use an outspoken freedom of speech unusual in successful politicians. He was so utterly fearless, so oblivious of the consequence of plain speaking, that his opponents were frequently dumbfounded. He was a man who in his oratorical flights shattered convention, but never transcended truth; for politically, as well as personally, he was utterly honest.

It is said of him that he never broke a promise; that in all things his word was a word of honour. The motto he chose when Queen Victoria conferred upon him a baronetcy was "Honest and without deceit"—*Franc et sans dol.*

At the end of his career, when, as a sick man near unto death, he appealed for the last time to his own people of Quebec for support, they denied him—he was cast aside, and defeated. The leader was repudiated by his friends—the prophet in his own country ceased to be regarded as a prophet. Because of some purely provincial squabble, Quebec, the country of his life and of his heart, his own beloved Quebec, repudiated him —repudiated Cartier.



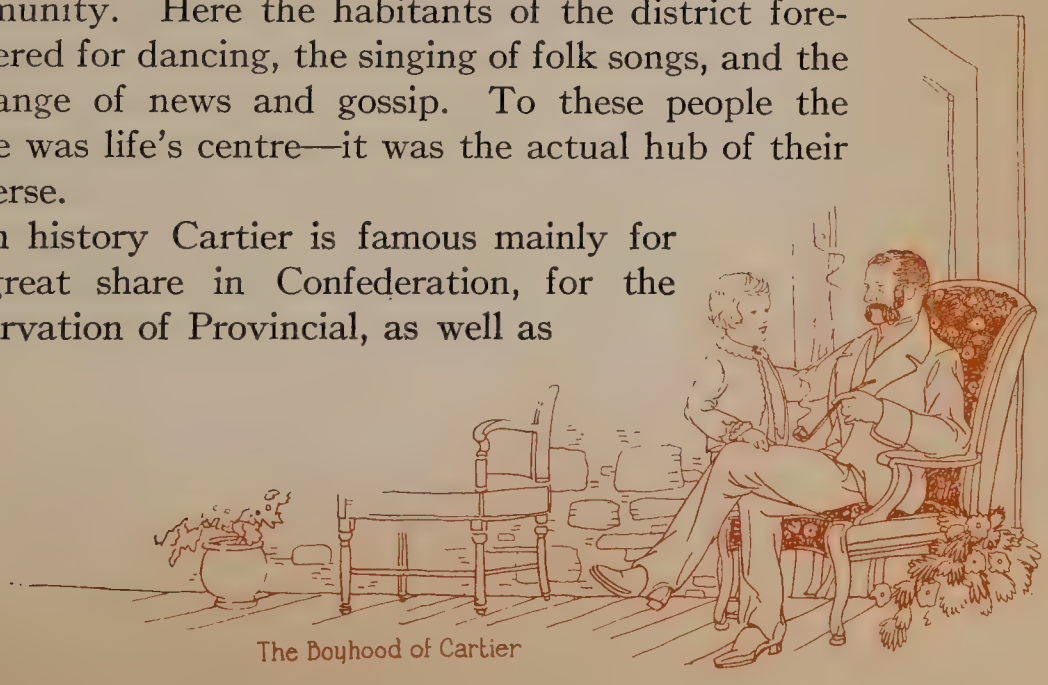
Thus a great life, begun in defeat may be regarded also as having finished in defeat. Though his life was filled with triumph and tremendous achievement; though he did more

than any other man for his own people; his finish was failure; and Quebec would have none of him. He died before that tragic rupture could be healed. He died with his great nature still wounded by the ingratitude of those whom he had served, and, above all, whom he had loved. It has been the fate of many really great men.

Georges Etienne Cartier was a man who in his time followed many roles. He was student, lawyer, poet, rebel, singer, patriot, statesman, premier; a man who was at once a Frenchman and a Canadian; a father of Confederation and a baronet of the United Kingdom. A complex man was this native of the district of Richelieu in the Province of Quebec, and of Ottawa. Collateral descendant of Jacques Cartier who in 1534 discovered Canada for France, Georges Etienne was a direct descendant of an officer of the Carignan-Salières Regiment, who happened to settle in the district of Richelieu of Lower Canada in 1672.

Born in 1814 of wealthy parents who were almost of seigniorial degree, Georges Etienne lived throughout his youth in a large house—the House of Seven Chimneys. This House of Seven Chimneys appears to have been the centre of the social life of a gay and prosperous community. Here the habitants of the district foregathered for dancing, the singing of folk songs, and the exchange of news and gossip. To these people the house was life's centre—it was the actual hub of their universe.

In history Cartier is famous mainly for his great share in Confederation, for the preservation of Provincial, as well as



The Boyhood of Cartier

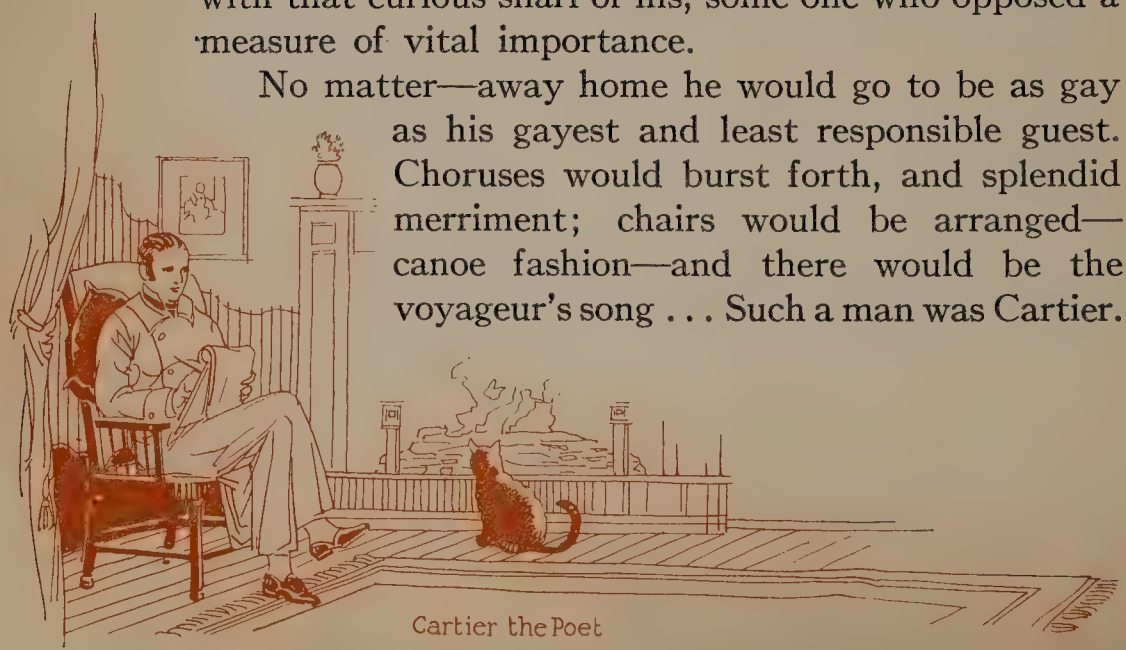
Dominion, Governments, for the part he played in gaining for the Dominion the Great North West Territories, and for his political leadership with and under Sir John A. Macdonald.

Cartier was probably the best type of middle-class French-Canadian known in Western history; a man simple and strong, gay and sincere. Ottawa never housed a more lovable man—Cartier was just Georges Etienne Cartier. It would be foolish to compare him with Laurier to the advantage or disadvantage of either statesman. These two men were of types incapable of comparison. Both were great, but Cartier was Georges Etienne Cartier, of Quebec.

Imagine this man at the period of his supreme power—a high minister of the Dominion, the Prime Minister—giving parties in his official residence in the manner of the parties his parents gave in the district of Richelieu, in the House of Seven Chimneys.

Songs, folk-songs and merriment, laughter, joviality, spontaneity; the eternal and splendid spontaneity of the French-Canadian would take the place of fierce debate. Cartier would leave the House of Commons where he endured the dull agony of responsibility. Possibly he had just denounced fiercely, tremendously, with that curious snarl of his, some one who opposed a measure of vital importance.

No matter—away home he would go to be as gay as his gayest and least responsible guest. Choruses would burst forth, and splendid merriment; chairs would be arranged—canoe fashion—and there would be the voyageur's song . . . Such a man was Cartier.



Cartier the Poet

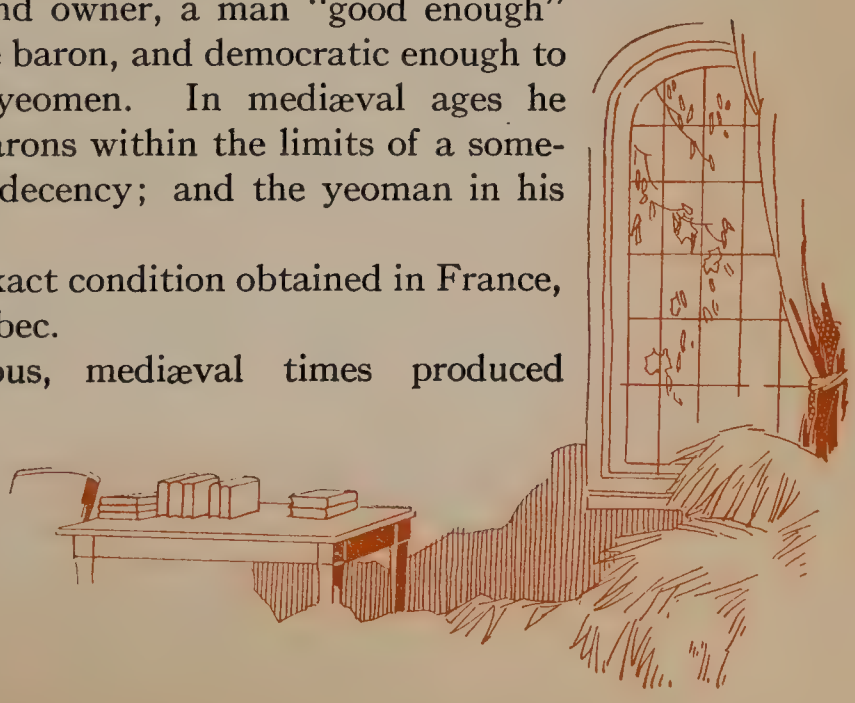
That old home of his, his father's house in Richelieu, was a structure which played a large part in the building of Georges Etienne's character. It has been noted that it was a large house—three times the size of the house of the ordinary man, of the mere habitant. In an English village it would have been called the Manor house, and its owner, the squire. And the squires of England were men of infinite importance—a man of such importance was the father of Georges Etienne Cartier, in French-Canada.

The feudal system existed in a modified form in the Province of Quebec up to the time of Confederation; just as it did in England, in more modified fashion, in olden days. In Quebec the great local terrestrial potentate was the seigneur—an aristocrat, possessed of certain curious feudal rights called seigniorial rights. In England it was the lord of manor, usually a titled man, a baron, descendant of a score of barons, who possessed these rights—rights, possibly legal, but difficult to define.

In feudal times, the social link between the seigneur or baron, and habitant or yeoman, was that type of solid man known in England as the squire. He was invariably a land owner, a man "good enough" to dine with the baron, and democratic enough to entertain the yeomen. In mediæval ages he kept the bad barons within the limits of a somewhat distorted decency; and the yeoman in his proper place.

An almost exact condition obtained in France, and in old Quebec.

These curious, mediæval times produced



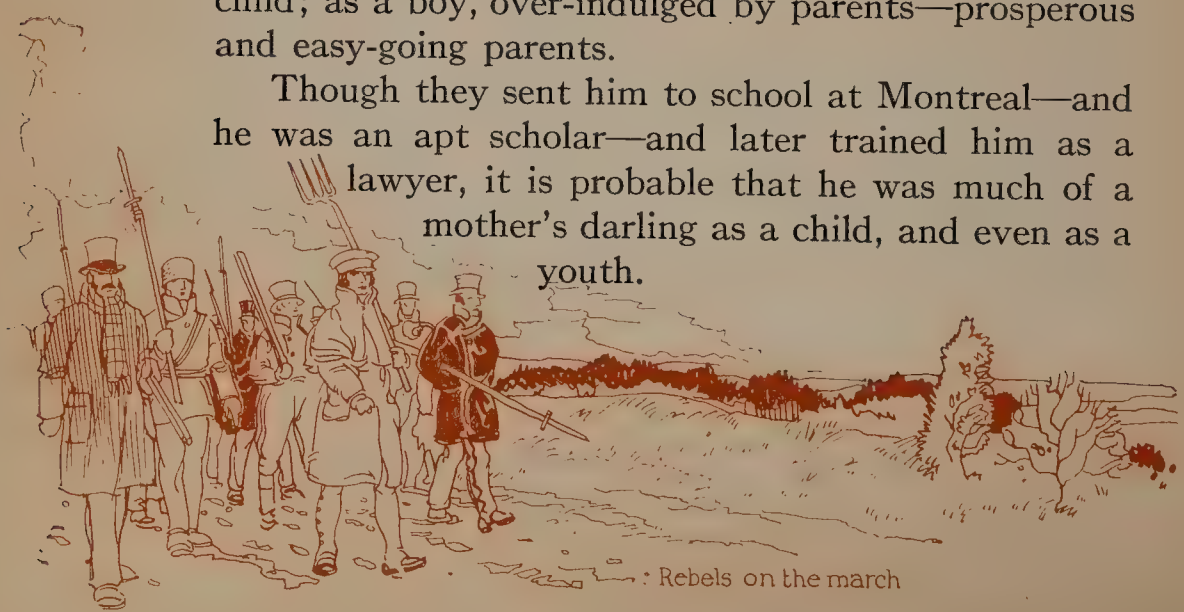
curious conditions, and curious types of people. Younger members of this democratic world of ours cannot appreciate the forcefulness of that ancient feudalism from which they have emerged.

Possibly it will be difficult for them to appreciate, in its proper degree, the effect of his status, as the son of a squire, upon Cartier. Although not an aristocrat, a seigneur, his father was a man of high degree, a man of substance.

His birthplace of the Seven Chimneys was the largest house in the Richelieu district. A third of the structure was used for the storage of merchandise—grain and farm implements; a third, the family occupied; and the other third was made into a sort of pension for aged persons. Aged French people of the district, who, handing over to the Cartier family their life's savings, had thus contracted for their sustenance until it came their time to die. An old French custom, that; a rough and ready system of purchasing an annuity. It speaks well for the social standing of Georges Etienne's father that a full third of his great house was filled with these annuitants.

Such an establishment was Cartier's birthplace. His youth was spent amidst the luxury of plenty. Probably he was what we call, colloquially, a spoiled child; as a boy, over-indulged by parents—prosperous and easy-going parents.

Though they sent him to school at Montreal—and he was an apt scholar—and later trained him as a lawyer, it is probable that he was much of a mother's darling as a child, and even as a youth.



: Rebels on the march

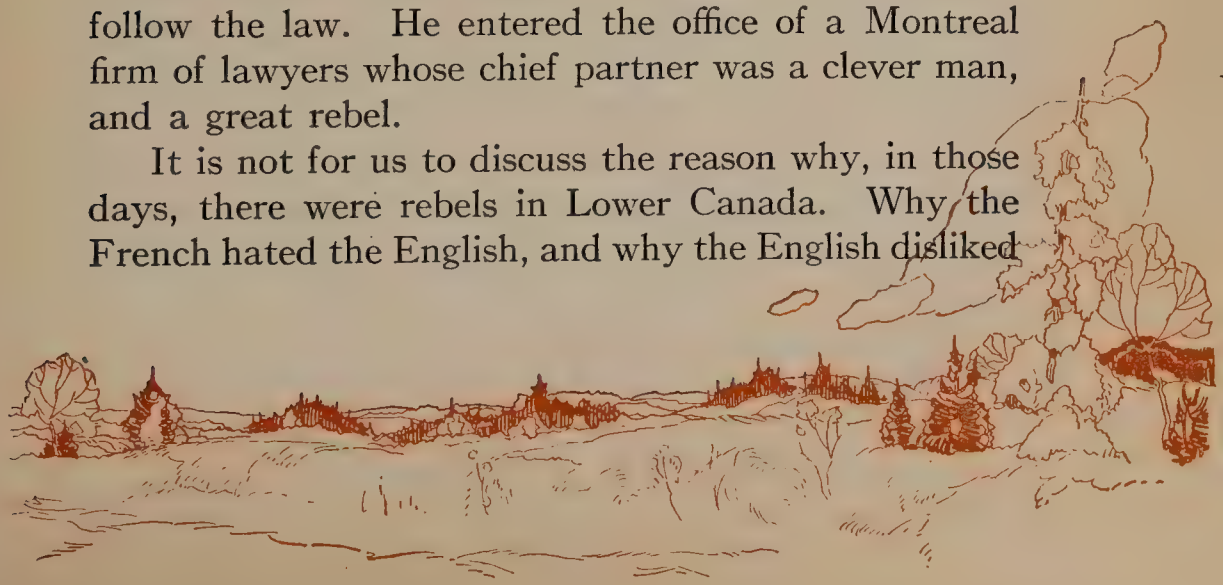
Certainly during the impressionable years of his adolescence he was unacquainted with the pinch of hunger or of want, or of the blessed discomfort of having to do without something—without anything. Probably he never realized the significance of the word "chores."

His life was lived in the full sunshine of summertime, or surrounded by the glow of generous fires in winter. He had to thank his father for tremendous advantages—for that wonderful house, where everyone foregathered, and where his father entertained so lavishly. Where there was always music and dancing, gossip and speech-making, laughter and delight, food in abundance, superabundance—that place of Arcadian perfection.

Georges Etienne became a poet and as a singer of songs locally famous. He absorbed the romance of life. Where there are French people inspired with the history of France, living amidst scenery associated with victory and defeat, there must always be romance; great romance. Georges Etienne absorbed it all; at that period he had no other outlet and so expressed his existence in song and verse a poet of that little France that had come to be planted by the Richelieu, in Lower Canada.

And later Georges Etienne, the poet, was trained to follow the law. He entered the office of a Montreal firm of lawyers whose chief partner was a clever man, and a great rebel.

It is not for us to discuss the reason why, in those days, there were rebels in Lower Canada. Why the French hated the English, and why the English disliked

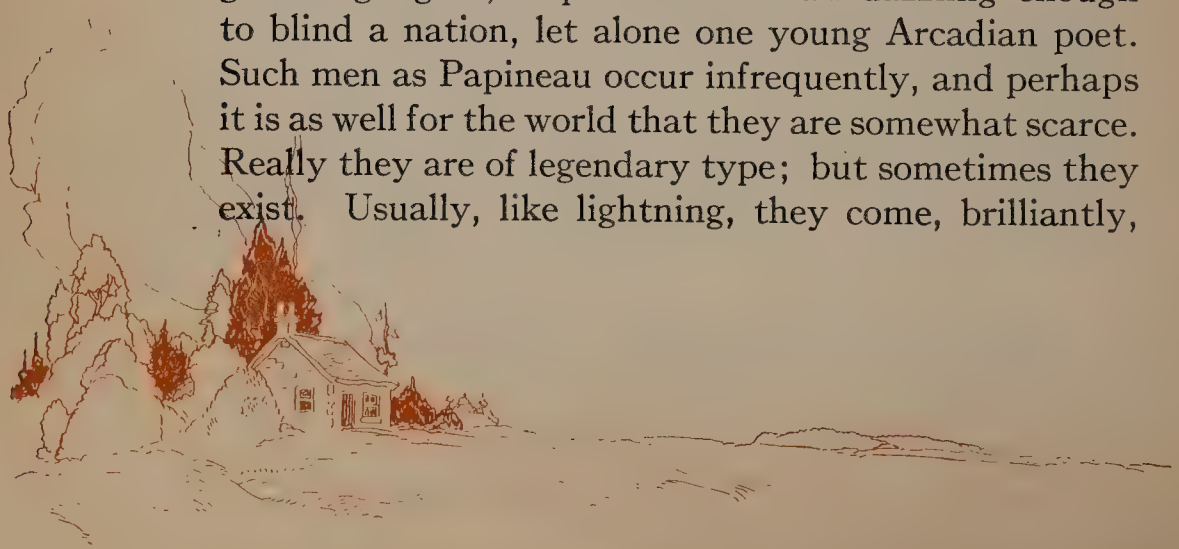


the French. There were faults on both sides, no doubt —as is usual in most unpleasant affairs. History books will explain the facts (as well as they can) of the uprising, and you can form your own conclusions.

Georges Etienne Cartier became a rebel mainly because he had begun by being a poet. And to a man of Cartier's temperament, satiated as he must have been by comfort, weary of well being, the strong tang of rebellion offered a fresh, and an immense experience.

He fell under the influence of Papineau; Papineau the picturesque man who seemed everything, and actually was nothing; a personage who must, to a youth, have appeared immensely magnificent. This orator-agitator-statesman-rebel, Papineau, ought to have been born a great aristocrat, or the son of a king, in the days of the Paladins. Instead he was a natural genius, a great and inconsistent genius of nothing; an imitation aristocrat, an imitation everything. But, nevertheless, a splendid personage, this son of the notary who had "become the owner of the seigniory of 'La Petite Nation'—an unknown spot, lost in the forest." The picturesque Papineau, Louis Joseph Papineau, inherited the seigniory from his father, the notary, and built the magnificent manor of Montebello.

Following an adolescence Arcadian in its character, Georges Etienne was suddenly confronted by this glittering figure, Papineau. A man dazzling enough to blind a nation, let alone one young Arcadian poet. Such men as Papineau occur infrequently, and perhaps it is as well for the world that they are somewhat scarce. Really they are of legendary type; but sometimes they exist. Usually, like lightning, they come, brilliantly,



to destroy. Ornate men with minds which, instead of being crystal clear, are kaleidoscopic.

Papineau preached rebellion. He hated the English aristocrat; most of all he hated the rule of England in Lower Canada, which he claimed to be French, and independent.

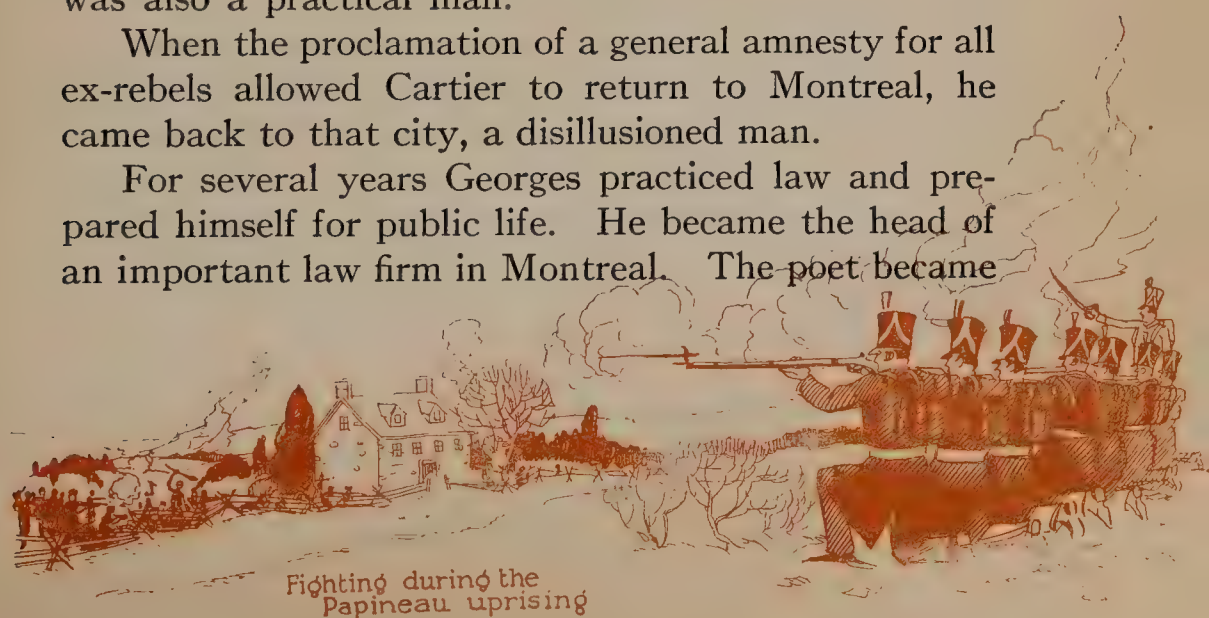
War—rebellion, came. And in the fighting Georges Etienne took his part—valiantly enough. He was a rebel; one of a somewhat disordered army, fighting; fighting as a poet turned soldier should fight, for a cause which the splendid Papineau said, was magnificent.

Georges Cartier stood to arms and endured the shock of assault; he conducted himself calmly under fire; he even swam a river in the face of spluttering musketry to carry dispatches, and once faced what seemed certain death, to bring succour to his side. The poet fought desperately and heroically enough, but his was the wrong side. And when the little rebellion died down he found himself a fugitive in the wilderness, and at last, an exile in the United States.

Thus ended Georges Cartier's experience as a rebel. He learned to look upon Papineau as an ill-balanced, if splendid, dreamer of dreams, rather than a practical reformer; and he finished with him. For in spite of his poetry, and his large imagination, Georges Etienne was also a practical man.

When the proclamation of a general amnesty for all ex-rebels allowed Cartier to return to Montreal, he came back to that city, a disillusioned man.

For several years Georges practiced law and prepared himself for public life. He became the head of an important law firm in Montreal. The poet became



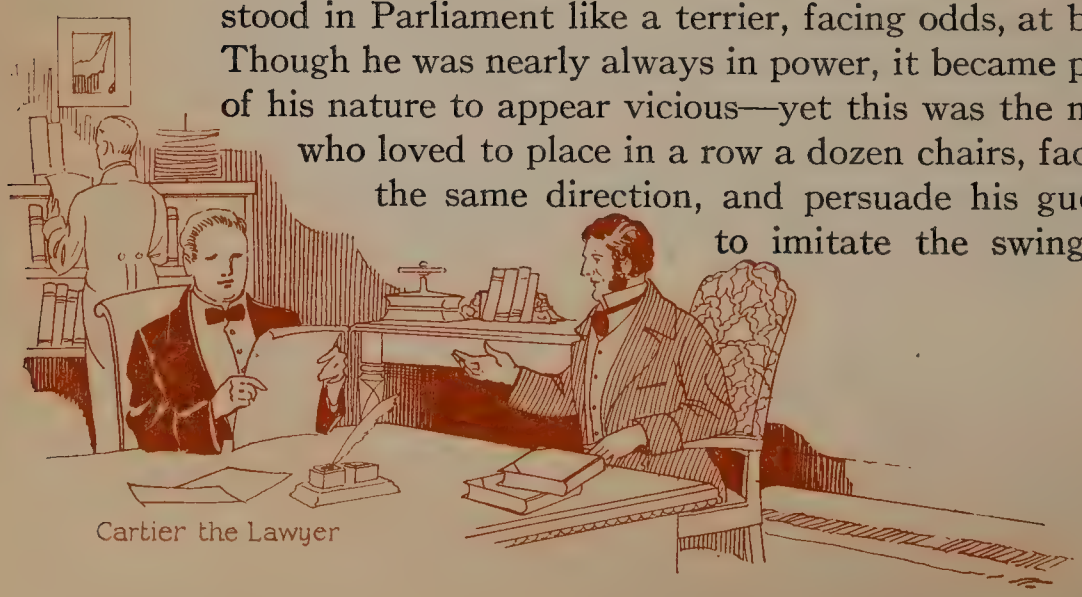
Fighting during the Papineau uprising

a practicing lawyer; the dreamer, a commercial thinker. He entered Parliament at the age of thirty-five; six years later he was in the Cabinet.

It may be said of Cartier that before he entered Parliament and so became an avowed politician, his instinct was for a French Lower Canada; an independent district which should be rigidly French to the absolute exclusion of the British, the American and all other people. But after he entered Parliament he became increasingly Canadian. His outlook broadened; his vision extended; and in the end he became one of the Fathers of Confederation.

It was Georges Etienne Cartier more than any other man who was responsible for the entry of Lower Canada into the confederation we now call the Dominion.

For several years this French-Canadian with bristly hair, harsh voice and rather unpleasing manner, led his countrymen in the united parliament of Upper and Lower Canada. Like a fierce dog he fought to gain any and every advantage for his province. His manner suggested that he was ever on the alert to snatch anything he could get—for Quebec. He ruled forcefully. In Parliament he was respected, even feared. Prosaic Liberals, like George Brown, probably disliked him—could not understand him. Even men of infinite sympathy and imagination could not fathom him. He stood in Parliament like a terrier, facing odds, at bay. Though he was nearly always in power, it became part of his nature to appear vicious—yet this was the man who loved to place in a row a dozen chairs, facing the same direction, and persuade his guests to imitate the swing of



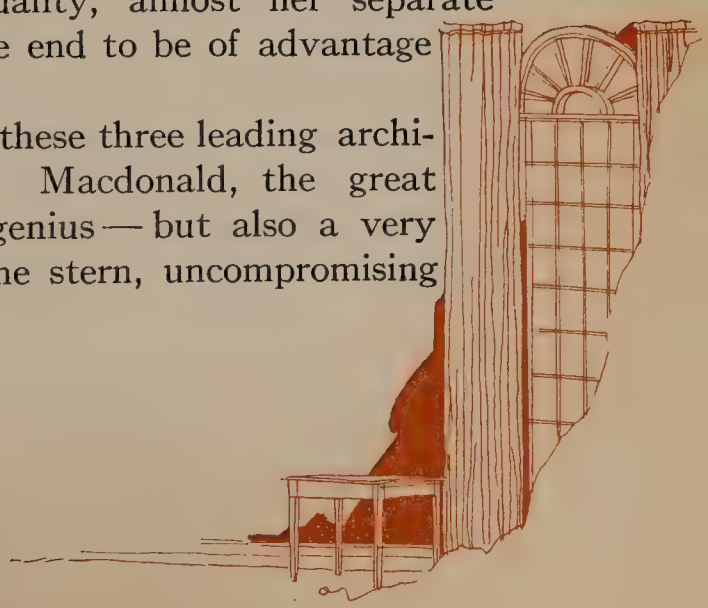
Cartier the Lawyer

the paddle and sing the voyageur's song, all joining in the sonorous choruses. Joyous guests of a joyous host, gay performers all. But, in the great Parliament House, he was the grey terrier dog with bristly hair and teeth bared.

There is little doubt that in a very large degree it is to Cartier Canada owes the perfect system of government in existence to-day. The two other great leaders of Confederation, Macdonald and Brown, undoubtedly favoured government of the entire Dominion by two houses, in the simple English fashion. Cartier stood out for a Federal Government which should control national affairs, railways, trade, and so on. He insisted that the provinces, especially his beloved Quebec, should be permitted to control its own religious, educational and domestic affairs. In fact his policy was the policy which was eventually adopted; the system which survives to this day. A system acknowledged by the civilized world to be an ideal method of government for a Dominion so vast, geographically, as Canada is to-day. Tested by sixty years of experience, it has not been found wanting. The Government of the Australian Commonwealth, and the various Australian States, is founded entirely on the Canadian model.

So that Cartier's tenacity of purpose in retaining for Quebec her individuality, almost her separate nationality, proved in the end to be of advantage to the whole Dominion.

An oddly mixed trio, these three leading architects of the Dominion: Macdonald, the great leader — an undoubted genius — but also a very convivial man; Brown, the stern, uncompromising

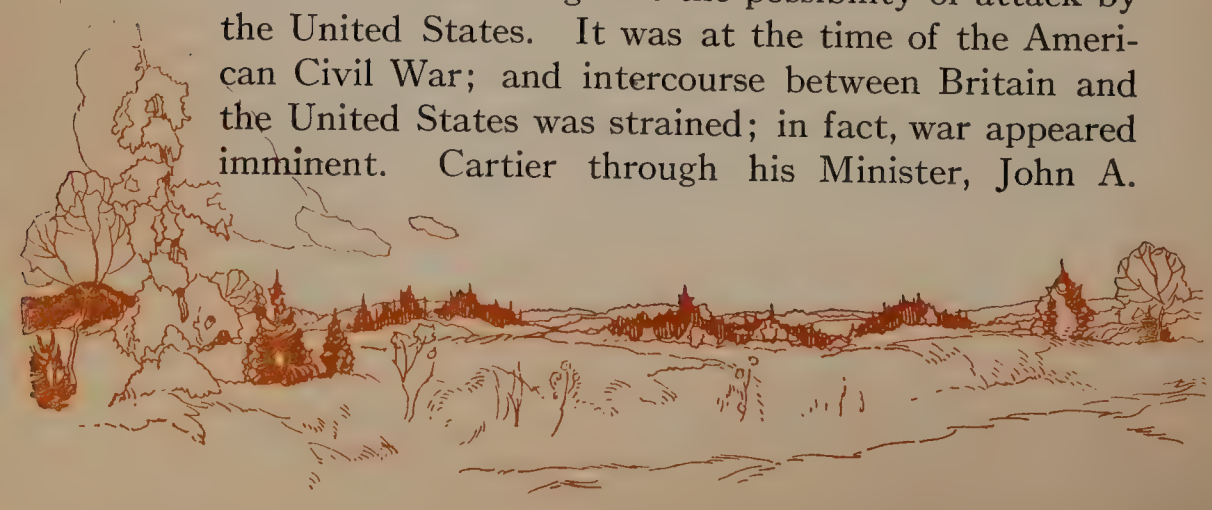


Presbyterian, a strong man, but by no means convivial; and Cartier, the Frenchman, inflexible of purpose, but something of a poet. Each of these three men distrusted the other two, but most of all Macdonald and Cartier distrusted Brown. Yet if one of the three had withdrawn from the great compact of union, Confederation would have been doomed. Galt, Tupper and the other great lights of Confederation, must have had many uneasy moments during the Conference. . . . Probably Tupper was the successful peacemaker.

Before Confederation Cartier had already proved himself a statesman of the constructive type. By immense effort and literally years of labour, he had carried through the codification of the laws of Lower Canada; he had materially strengthened the educational system, and had established fifteen new judicial districts throughout Quebec, thus placing law courts in districts remote from Montreal, which, until then, had been the sole legal centre of the province.

Also he had much to do with the final settlement of that ancient and complicated problem of Quebec, seigniorial tenure and the land problem.

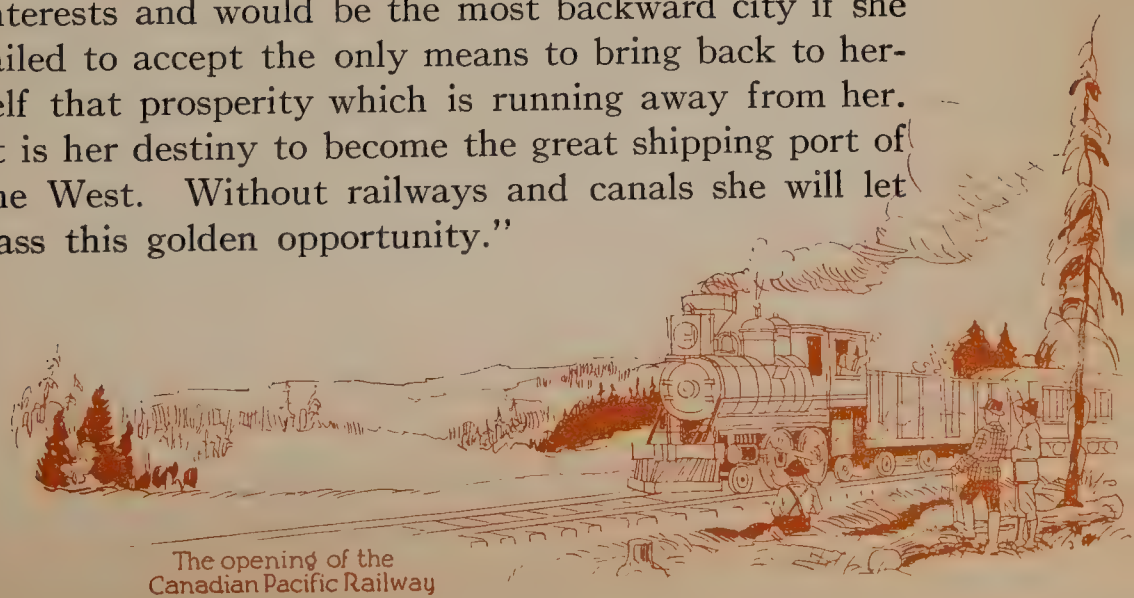
It is curious that this one-time rebel, Cartier, should have suffered his first defeat as Prime Minister of the United Canadas (before Confederation) on a measure for the establishment of a strong militia force for the defence of Canada against the possibility of attack by the United States. It was at the time of the American Civil War; and intercourse between Britain and the United States was strained; in fact, war appeared imminent. Cartier through his Minister, John A.



Macdonald, presented a bill for the establishment of a large force to co-operate with the British troops in defence of Canada. The measure was rejected, and Cartier tendered his resignation.

After Confederation Cartier accepted the portfolio of Minister of Militia and Defence under the first Federal Prime Minister, Macdonald, and it was Cartier who organized the system of defence of the Dominion which remains in existence to this day. The efficiency of that system, inspired by the French-Canadian's "Sense of duty to the country, and strong attachment to British connection," is another proof of the genius of this Canadian patriot, poet and dreamer, lawyer, statesman, and military expert. . . . And there is at least one other great quality he possessed. Cartier became associated with the builders of railways long before Confederation. As early as the year 1846 he was in the field advocating the construction of railways. When he reached a position of power in Parliament, he took the earliest opportunity of stating "Our policy is the policy of railways." This statement has been credited to other men, but I believe Cartier was its author. Certainly it was his policy.

Addressing the citizens of Montreal in 1846 on the advisability of subsidizing the Montreal and Portland Railway, Cartier said: "Montreal would be blind to her interests and would be the most backward city if she failed to accept the only means to bring back to herself that prosperity which is running away from her. It is her destiny to become the great shipping port of the West. Without railways and canals she will let pass this golden opportunity."



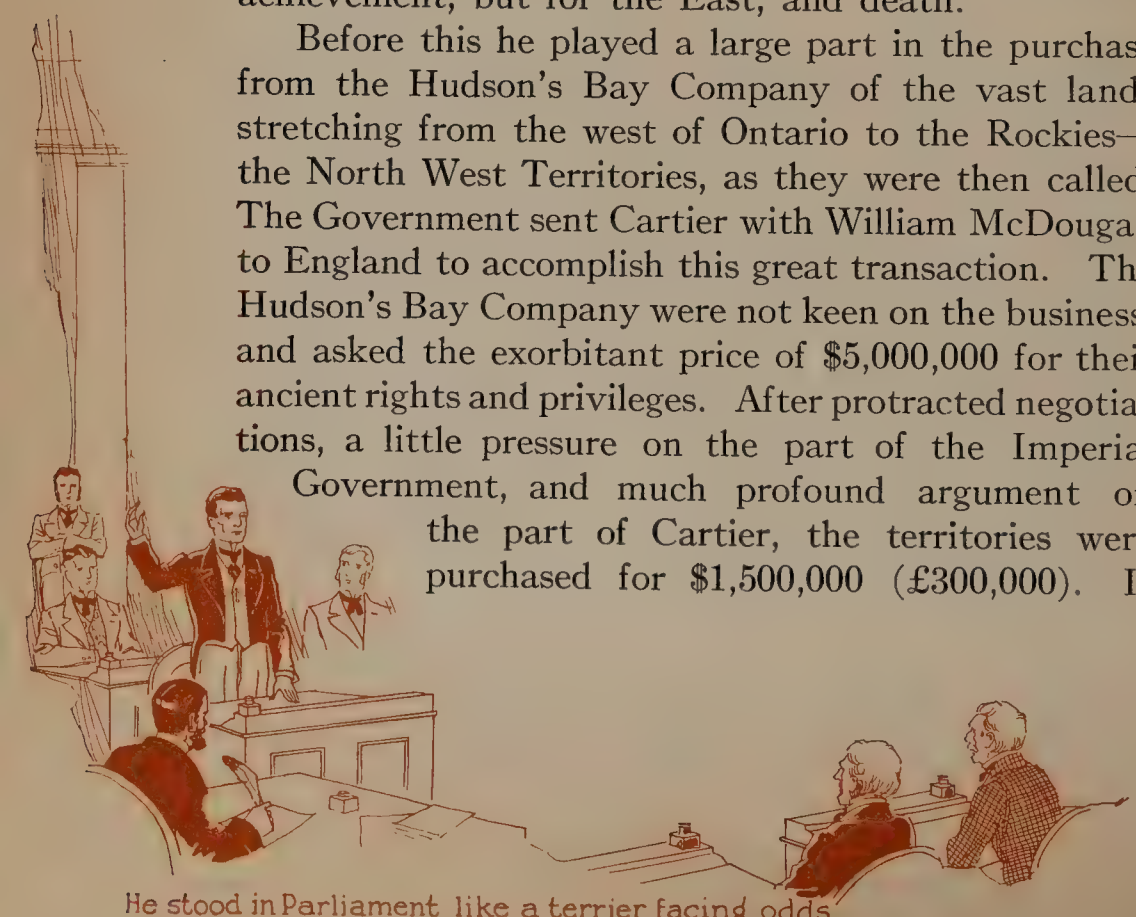
The opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway

As a lawyer he became connected with the Grand Trunk Railway. His zeal in the construction of this national railway was tremendous, his labour for its success, untiring. In the House of Assembly in 1854 he said: "I have been entrusted with the bill which has given life to the Grand Trunk, and I take more pride in that fact than in any other act of my life."

Many years later, in 1872, Cartier engineered through the Commons the charter of the C.P.R. It was the last great act of his brilliant life, and perhaps the most dramatic. The construction of this line was one of the terms of the union of British Columbia with Canada. There was a prolonged debate in the Commons, and considerable opposition to the measure. But when the Speaker announced the passing of the bill, Cartier rose to his feet, and, to the delight of a cheering house, shouted "All aboard for the West."

He, alas, was en route, not for the West and great achievement, but for the East, and death.

Before this he played a large part in the purchase from the Hudson's Bay Company of the vast lands stretching from the west of Ontario to the Rockies—the North West Territories, as they were then called. The Government sent Cartier with William McDougall to England to accomplish this great transaction. The Hudson's Bay Company were not keen on the business, and asked the exorbitant price of $5,000,000 for their ancient rights and privileges. After protracted negotiations, a little pressure on the part of the Imperial Government, and much profound argument on the part of Cartier, the territories were purchased for $1,500,000 (£300,000). It



He stood in Parliament like a terrier facing odds

was at a dinner given by the British Prime Minister, Gladstone, in celebration of this epoch-making event, that Cartier used the apt and oft quoted description of the French-Canadian, "We French-Canadians are British subjects like the others, but British subjects speaking French."

This great man and splendid Canadian, Sir Georges Etienne Cartier, Baronet, left Canada in September, 1872, a very sick man. He went to England to secure the best medical attention obtainable. In London on May 23rd, 1873, he died.

Franc et sans dol.

Joseph Howe



Joseph Howe

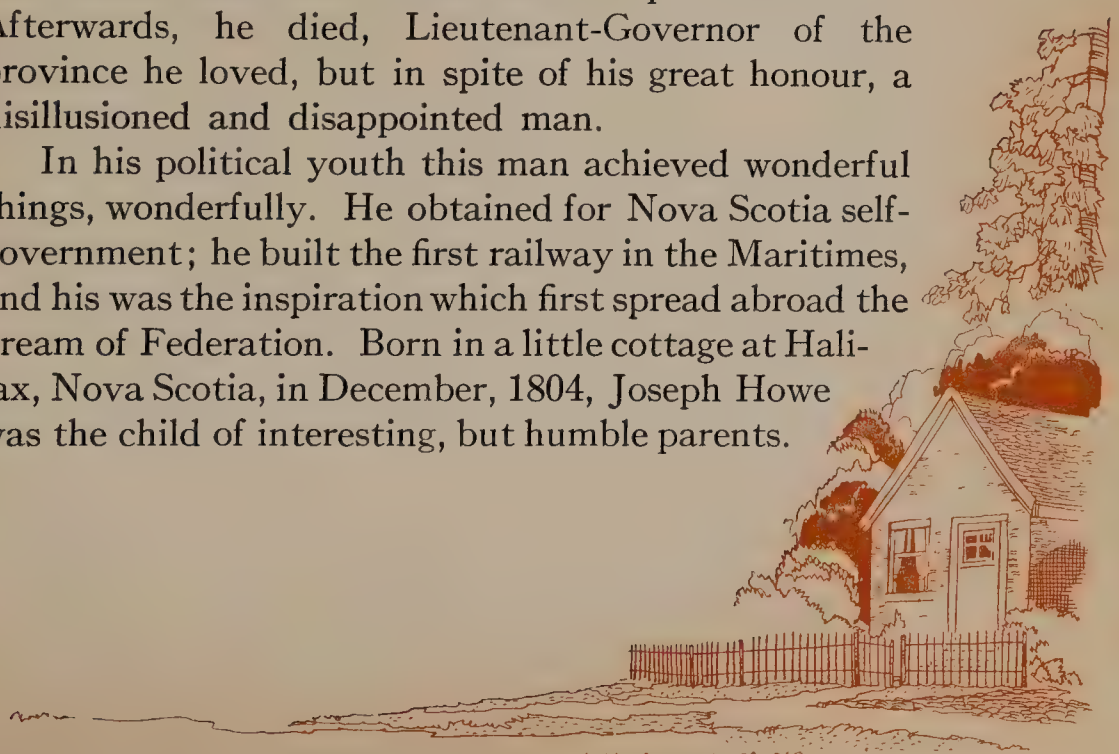
1804 - 1873

Joseph Howe

POET, publicist, boon companion, master of men and of affairs, Joseph Howe was a great Canadian, and one of the most outstanding personalities of his generation. He lived in the historic period of Canada's birth; the time of Macdonald, Cartier, Tupper, Brown, Strathcona and the rest; and among all these great men he was the most unfortunate; though, as a political warrior, he was by no means the least valiant.

He was a natural genius—a man of great talent who expended that talent in the service of the people, unselfishly. He spent his life strenuously, fighting in the sacred cause of patriotism; yet scores of smaller people have triumphed more effectively than did Joseph Howe. For thirty-five years he lived splendidly, the supreme leader of a great people; then for five years he dragged out an existence, filling an important office, but nevertheless self-condemned to political death. Afterwards, he died, Lieutenant-Governor of the province he loved, but in spite of his great honour, a disillusioned and disappointed man.

In his political youth this man achieved wonderful things, wonderfully. He obtained for Nova Scotia self-government; he built the first railway in the Maritimes, and his was the inspiration which first spread abroad the dream of Federation. Born in a little cottage at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in December, 1804, Joseph Howe was the child of interesting, but humble parents.

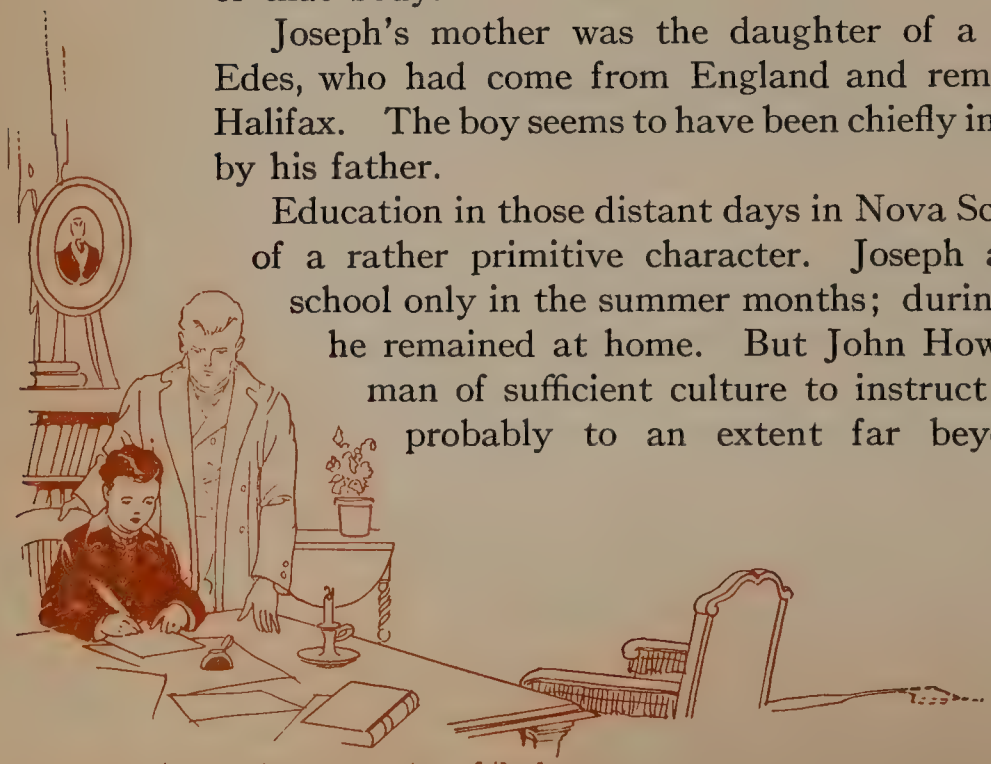


Howe's birthplace in Halifax

His father, John Howe, was an eccentric man. He was a Loyalist who had come to Nova Scotia from Boston, the only one of four brothers who remained loyal to Great Britain. He was a man of some culture. For a time he was the King's Printer, and afterwards he became a postmaster in Halifax. Also he was a prominent member of a religious sect known as the Glassites, a devout people who accepted the Bible as the only authority, and were absolutely opposed to any established church or to a paid clergy. The members were in the habit of meeting together on Sundays for worship, and they had an absolute prejudice against a professional parson of any denomination. Though Joseph was never identified with this curious sect, early contact with its members influenced him throughout his life. A great Bible reader, he never identified himself with any religious denomination, though he attended some place of worship every Sunday. It did not matter to him whether it was Anglican, Roman or Methodist. In Halifax he usually attended the Presbyterian Church, because his wife was a member of that body.

Joseph's mother was the daughter of a Captain Edes, who had come from England and remained in Halifax. The boy seems to have been chiefly influenced by his father.

Education in those distant days in Nova Scotia was of a rather primitive character. Joseph attended school only in the summer months; during winter he remained at home. But John Howe was a man of sufficient culture to instruct his son, probably to an extent far beyond the



Howe's father made a companion of the boy

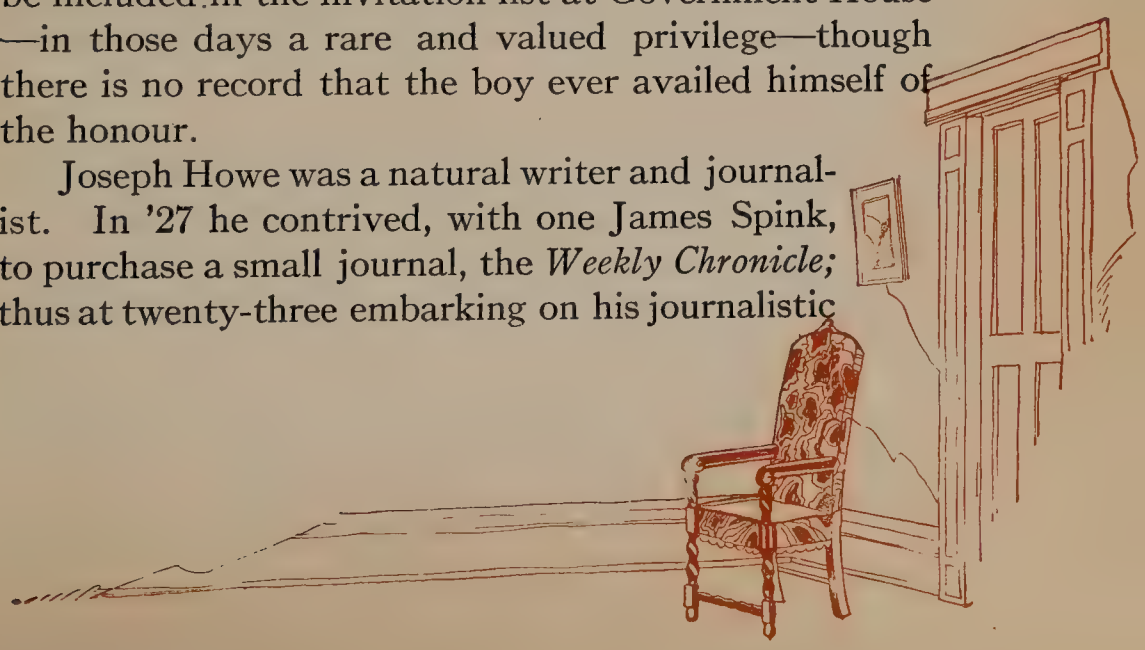
capacity of the local academy. He made a companion of the boy, and devoted much time to the cultivation of his mind. Joseph was of studious habits, and a voracious reader. He was fond of sports and outdoor life, a boy of splendid physique and excellent constitution, always happy when in the woods with his father or with the quiet companionship of a book.

John Howe was not a highly paid public servant, neither was he a man of a practical nature. It was his habit to pay for the simple needs of his family, and give what little money remained to the poor. He was, as his son said in after years: "far too good for this world."

So Joseph had to start contributing to the family purse at the early age of thirteen. He was apprenticed to a printer, and for ten years handled type—the leaden soldiers he was soon to manoeuvre so brilliantly in scores of literary engagements.

During these ten years he wrote a number of poems, some of which were printed in the Halifax papers. One at least attracted considerable attention. The Governor himself, the Earl of Dalhousie, was so impressed by its charm that he sent for young Howe, and warmly congratulated him. Also he caused the poet's name to be included in the invitation list at Government House —in those days a rare and valued privilege—though there is no record that the boy ever availed himself of the honour.

Joseph Howe was a natural writer and journalist. In '27 he contrived, with one James Spink, to purchase a small journal, the *Weekly Chronicle;* thus at twenty-three embarking on his journalistic

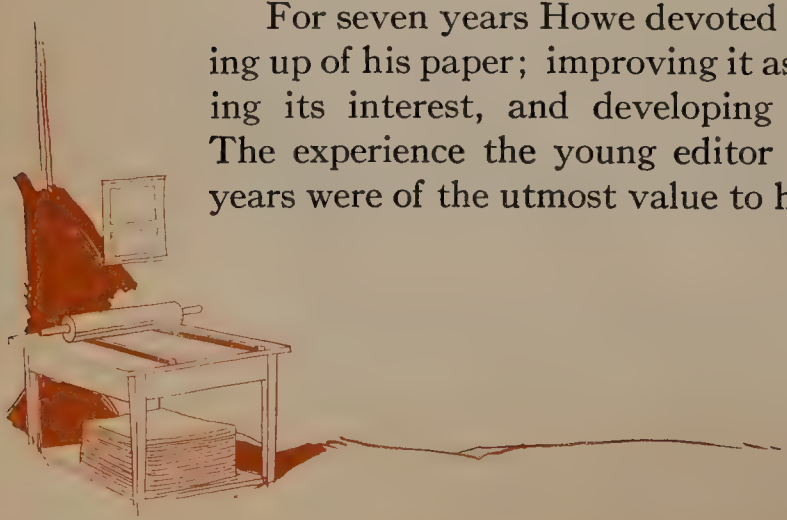


career. The name of the paper was changed to the *Acadian* and Howe appointed himself editor. It was a sort of literary sheet, and probably Joseph sprinkled it plentifully with examples of his own verse. Before the end of a year Howe sold his share of the *Acadian* to his partner, and purchased a far more important journal, the *Nova Scotian*. This was an ambitious paper of some political standing; and Joseph paid a thousand guineas for it. From what source he obtained the thousand guineas, history does not relate. It is more than probable that it was not a cash transaction.

However, we find that the thirteen-year-old printer's devil transformed himself into the editor-proprietor of an important newspaper at twenty-three; a metamorphosis as rapid almost as that of the chrysalis to the butterfly.

Shortly after this, in January, '28, when Howe was exactly twenty-three years and one month old, he married Catherine McNab, daughter of Captain John McNab of the Royal Nova Scotia Invincibles. Howe's marriage seems to have been the wisest action of his life. Throughout the years, Mrs. Howe proved not only a loving companion, but a most sagacious helpmate. Her quiet influence frequently restrained Howe from allowing his impetuous nature to transcend his better judgment.

For seven years Howe devoted himself to the building up of his paper; improving it as a property, increasing its interest, and developing its political power. The experience the young editor gained during these years were of the utmost value to him in his public life.

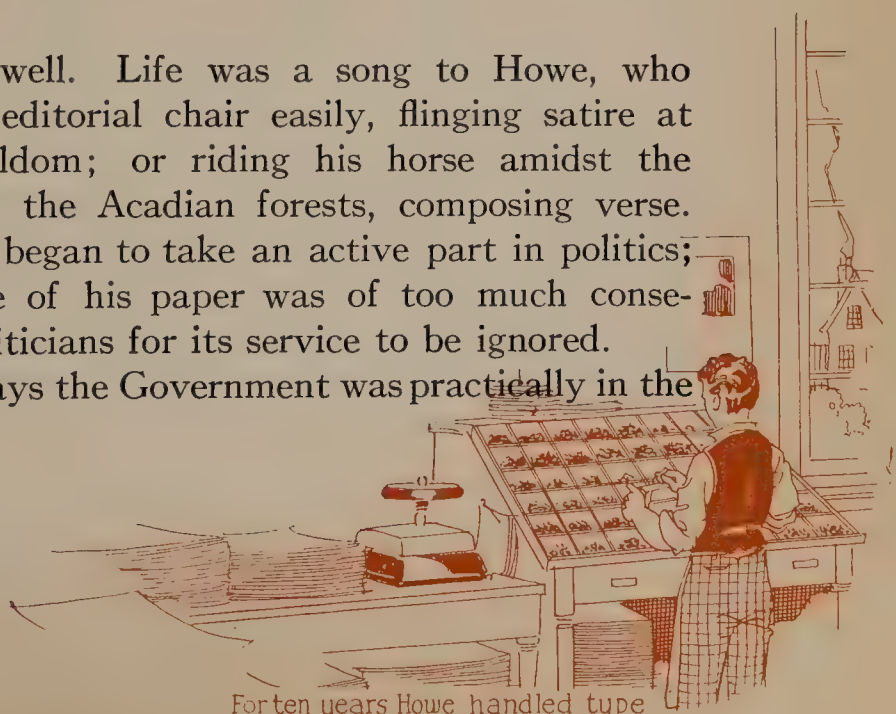


They constituted his real education. He traversed the Province of Nova Scotia north, south, east and west. He became acquainted with a vast number of people. He secured a seat in the press gallery of the Legislative Assembly, attended all the meetings, and reported all the debates. He knew every public man, every institution, and every person of note. And the *Nova Scotian* prospered.

But in all this hurly-burly of stereotyped journalism and business, he did not forget the finer shades of his profession. He wrote descriptive articles for his paper, and many fanciful sketches. He portrayed nature in prose and verse, and frequently penned a serious essay worth reading—and worth binding. Also he formed a club. The club held weekly meetings and discussed cabbages and kings, and a certain column of letterpress which appeared regularly in the *Nova Scotian*. Several brilliant men were members of this club, and contributed to the *causerie,* and one or two of these bohemians achieved fame. Chief among them, perhaps, were Thomas C. Haliburton, who wrote under the pseudonym Sam Slick, and Lawrence O'Connor Doyle, described by Howe as one of the greatest humourists of the period.

All went well. Life was a song to Howe, who occupied his editorial chair easily, flinging satire at obtuse officialdom; or riding his horse amidst the splendours of the Acadian forests, composing verse. Inevitably he began to take an active part in politics; the assistance of his paper was of too much consequence to politicians for its service to be ignored.

In those days the Government was practically in the

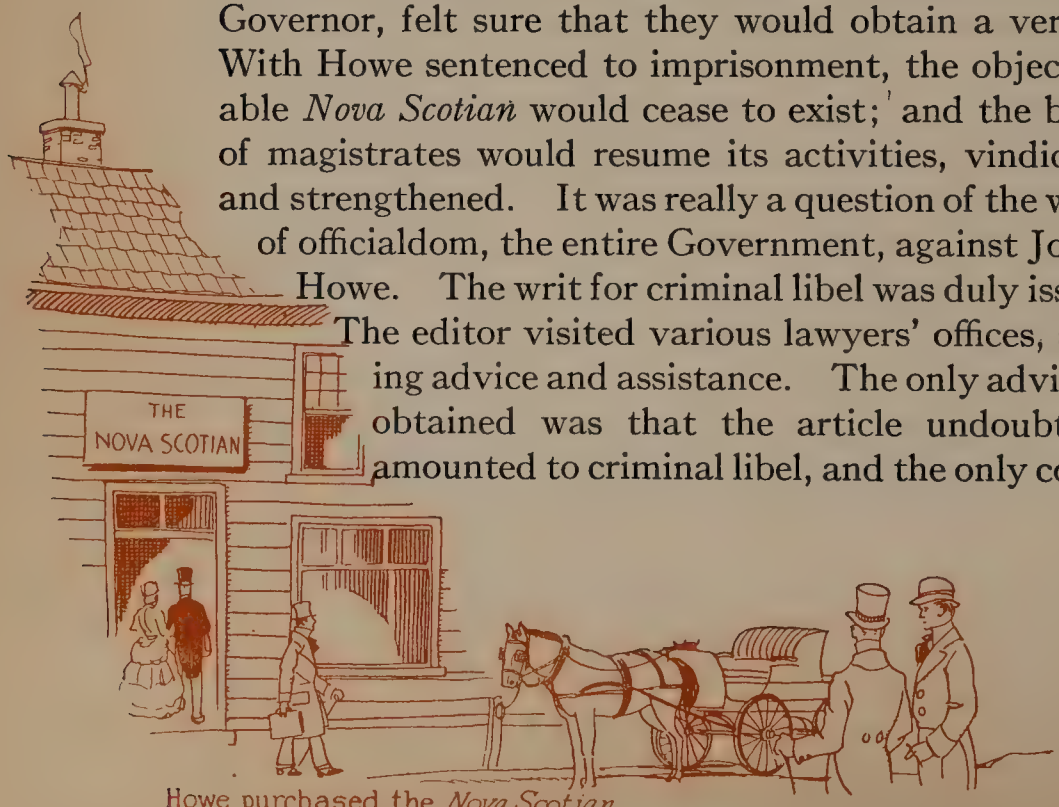


For ten years Howe handled type

hands of an autocratic Lieutenant-Governor, and the permanent officials he appointed. There was an elected legislature, but it was a legislature without real power. The City of Halifax had no charter. It was governed, as a part of the County of Halifax, by a bench of magistrates appointed by the Governor, over whom the people had no authority.

One eventful day, Howe, in the *Nova Scotian*, directly charged these magistrates with negligence and corrupt practices. He even went to the length of stating that, by fraud, they filched from the public, in fines and exactions, a sum approximating to thirty thousand pounds every year. Even from the poor and distressed, he asserted, these magistrates extracted over one thousand pounds per annum which they put in their own pockets.

Naturally these charges created a sensation. The board of magistrates tendered their resignation, and demanded that Howe be prosecuted for libel. It is to be imagined that these magistrates, knowing that Howe would be tried by a chief justice appointed by the Governor, felt sure that they would obtain a verdict. With Howe sentenced to imprisonment, the objectionable *Nova Scotian* would cease to exist; and the board of magistrates would resume its activities, vindicated and strengthened. It was really a question of the whole of officialdom, the entire Government, against Joseph Howe. The writ for criminal libel was duly issued. The editor visited various lawyers' offices, seeking advice and assistance. The only advice he obtained was that the article undoubtedly amounted to criminal libel, and the only course



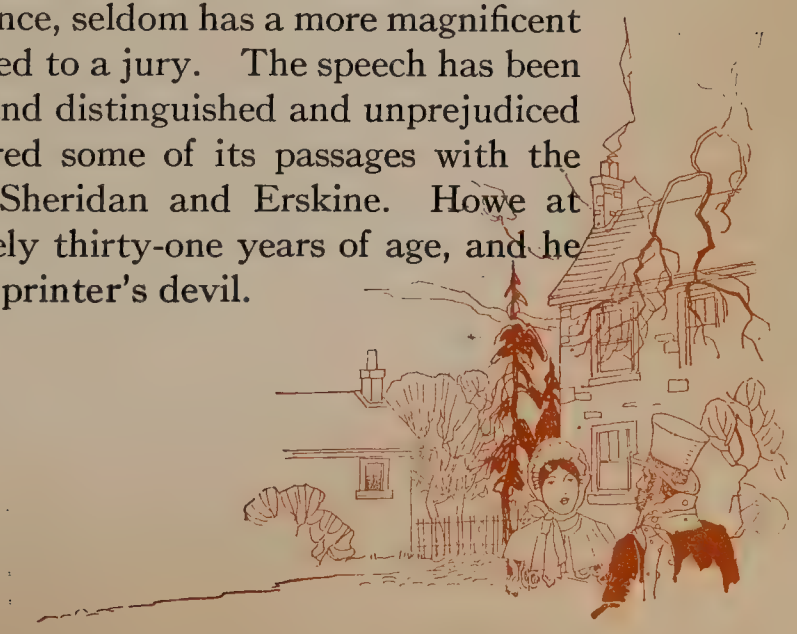
Howe purchased the *Nova Scotian*

open to him was to retract, apologize, and throw himself on the clemency of the court. It was suggested that, if he appeared sufficiently humble and contrite, he might even be permitted to continue the publication of his paper. The lawyers were unanimous in the opinion that the action could not be successfully defended.

Howe borrowed an armful of books, and, as he himself put it, threw himself on a sofa and read libel law for a week. By that time he had convinced himself that the lawyers were wrong, and that there was a good defence, if the case were properly presented to the court and jury.

He decided to undertake his own defence. Another week was spent in selecting and arranging the facts and public documents on which he relied. He finished at a late hour on the evening before the trial, and then had time to prepare and commit to memory only the first two paragraphs of his opening speech.

The trial opened before the Lord Chief Justice; the Attorney-General prosecuted, and with him was a very distinguished advocate. The opening address was duly delivered, and Howe rose to give his defence. He had never before spoken in public, was unused to courts, and was practically ignorant of law. Yet it is on official record that in the whole history of forensic eloquence in British jurisprudence, seldom has a more magnificent address been delivered to a jury. The speech has been preserved in print, and distinguished and unprejudiced judges have compared some of its passages with the orations of Burke, Sheridan and Erskine. Howe at that time was scarcely thirty-one years of age, and he had started life as a printer's devil.



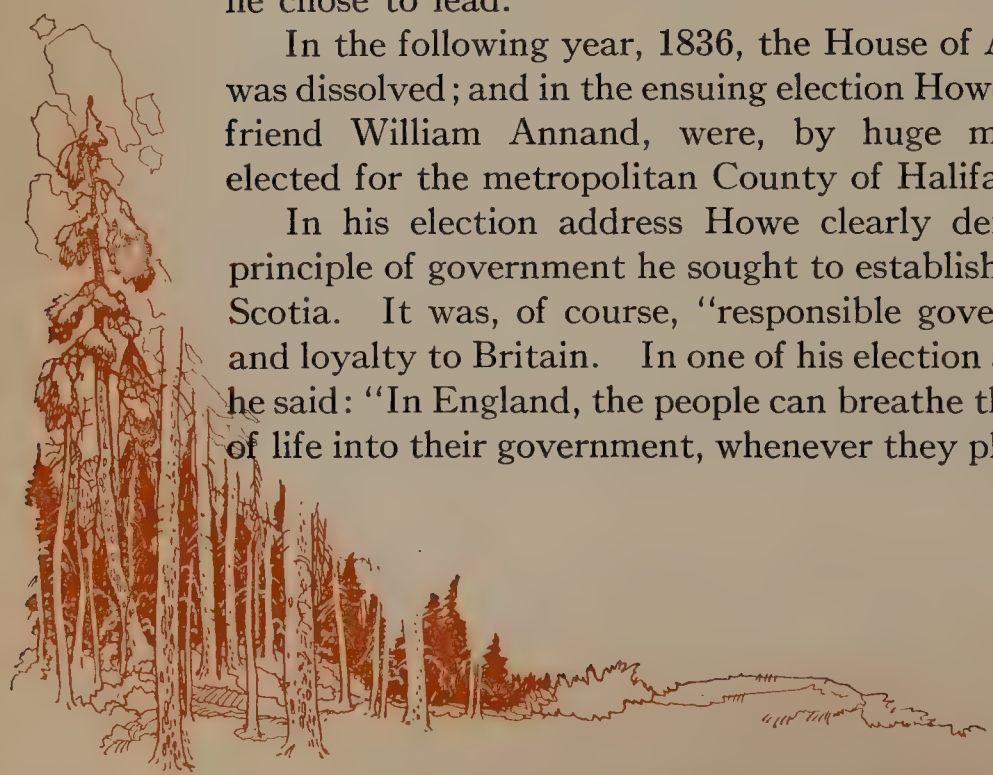
He spoke for over six hours. The Attorney-General replied, and the judge charged the jury. In summing up, the Chief Justice said, "In my opinion your duty is to state by your verdict that it is libellous." The trial had occupied two days, and during the whole of that time the Court House had been thronged with people. The jury retired and deliberated for ten minutes. Then they returned to their box, and delivered their verdict—"Not Guilty."

The crowd in the Court House burst into a tumult of cheers. Howe was lifted shoulder high and carried to his home, escorted by a multitude of citizens. Bands paraded the street far into the night. Again and again Howe had to address the people from the window of his house. Again and again had he to exhort them to keep the peace, and refrain from rioting.

Of course, the result of it all was that Joseph Howe became a great political figure. From the defendant's stand, in that dingy Court House in Halifax, he had unconsciously recruited a great army of adherents; of men and women who were prepared to follow him wherever he chose to lead.

In the following year, 1836, the House of Assembly was dissolved; and in the ensuing election Howe, and his friend William Annand, were, by huge majorities, elected for the metropolitan County of Halifax.

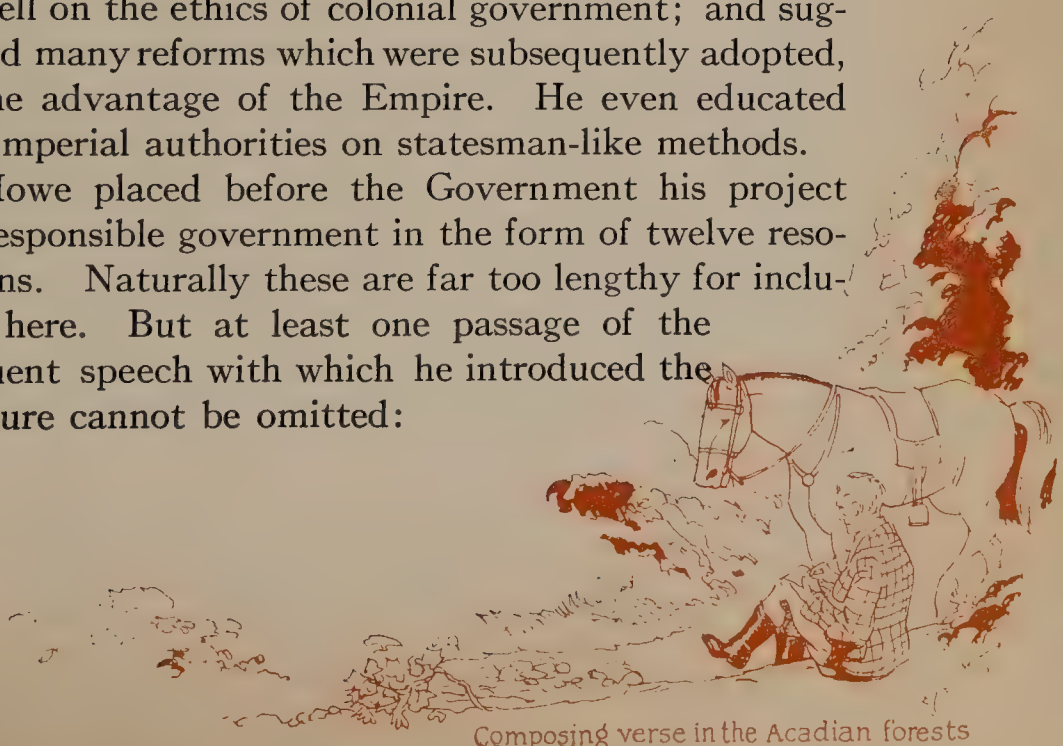
In his election address Howe clearly defined the principle of government he sought to establish in Nova Scotia. It was, of course, "responsible government," and loyalty to Britain. In one of his election addresses he said: "In England, the people can breathe the breath of life into their government, whenever they please. In



this country the government is like an ancient Egyptian mummy, wrapped up in narrow and antique prejudices —it is dead and inanimate, yet likely to last forever. We are desirous of a change, not such as shall divide us from our brethren across the water, but which will ensure to us, what they enjoy. All we ask for is what exists at home—a system of responsibility to the people extending through all the departments supported at the public expense."

Howe's first action on entering the House was to propose and carry a motion for admitting the public to the debates; hitherto the chamber had been a private place to which only a few journalists had been given access. Then he flung himself into the struggle for responsible government. This was in 1837. It may be said that Nova Scotia achieved self-government in 1848; the years between '37 and '48 represent Howe's gladiatorial period. In those days he fought with the gloves off, and with every weapon he could find. It was an epic struggle. During its progress the ex-printer's devil caused the withdrawal, or dismissal, of two Lieutenant-Governors. He lectured Lord John Russell on the ethics of colonial government; and suggested many reforms which were subsequently adopted, to the advantage of the Empire. He even educated the Imperial authorities on statesman-like methods.

Howe placed before the Government his project for responsible government in the form of twelve resolutions. Naturally these are far too lengthy for inclusion here. But at least one passage of the eloquent speech with which he introduced the measure cannot be omitted:



Composing verse in the Acadian forests

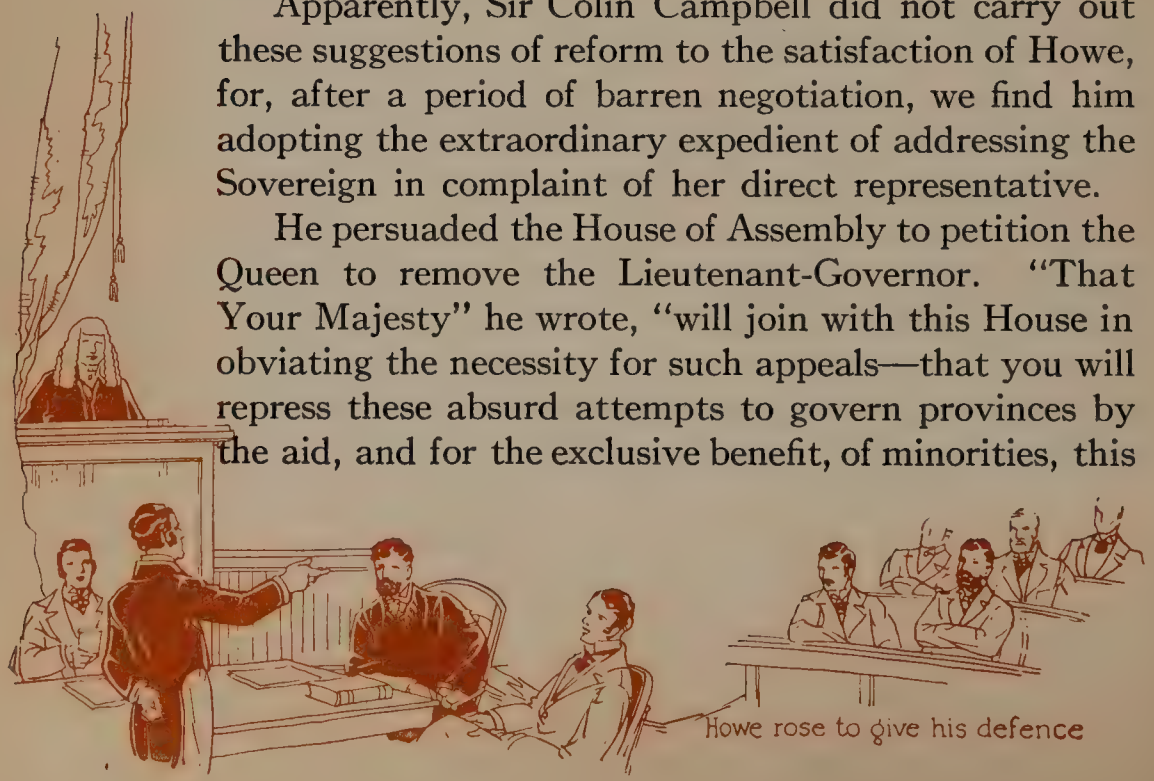
"I wish to live and die a British subject," he said, "but not a Briton only in name. Give me—give to my country—the blessed privilege of her constitution, and her laws. . . . Englishmen at home will despise us if we forget the lesson our common ancestors have bequeathed!"

We cannot go into all the manoeuvres Howe employed in getting these resolutions first passed by the Assembly, and then placed in front of the Colonial Secretary in London. Naturally the Governor's council denounced them and returned them, since one of the clauses was that the non-elective character of the constitution of this council should be amended. But eventually they reached London, and there the seed of reform fell on rather stony ground. The home authorities emphasized the distinction between a metropolitan and a colonial government, and definitely opposed the suggestion of responsible government.

But in regard to the council, the Colonial Secretary instructed Sir Colin Campbell, the Governor, to institute certain reforms.

Apparently, Sir Colin Campbell did not carry out these suggestions of reform to the satisfaction of Howe, for, after a period of barren negotiation, we find him adopting the extraordinary expedient of addressing the Sovereign in complaint of her direct representative.

He persuaded the House of Assembly to petition the Queen to remove the Lieutenant-Governor. "That Your Majesty" he wrote, "will join with this House in obviating the necessity for such appeals—that you will repress these absurd attempts to govern provinces by the aid, and for the exclusive benefit, of minorities, this

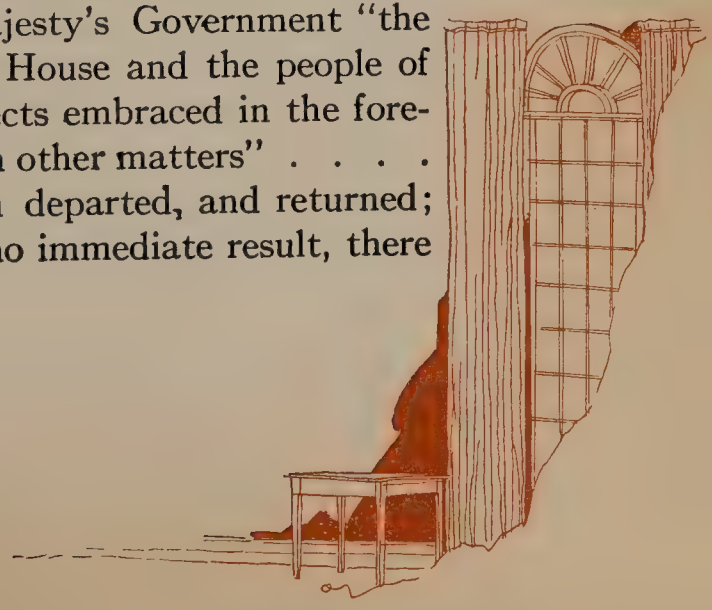


Howe rose to give his defence

Assembly confidently believes; and in asking Your Majesty to remove Sir Colin Campbell, and send to Nova Scotia one who will not only represent the Crown, but carry out its policy with fairness and good faith, ... etc."

This was a bold step to take, but Howe was a bold man; also he was an optimist. Whether Her Majesty ever saw this letter or not, it had the effect of bringing from Quebec the recently appointed Governor-General, Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham. He took over the reins of office and poor Colin Campbell faded away. Poulett Thomson did his best to smooth things over. No one quite knew what would happen until, a little later, a new Lieutenant-Governor, Lord Falkland, arrived from England with specific instructions to carry on his government in such a manner as to meet, if possible, the objections of the popular party. Falkland's great idea was to include in his council men representing all shades of political opinion. He was a young man of handsome appearance, inexperienced and of no great intelligence. But he was well meaning, and determined to do his best. He asked Howe to join his council, and Joseph agreed, on condition that two of his friends were also asked.

At about the time of the dramatic appeal to the throne, two members of the House were sent to England to represent to Her Majesty's Government "the views and wishes of this House and the people of Nova Scotia on the subjects embraced in the foregoing resolutions and such other matters" and so on. The mission departed, and returned; and though it produced no immediate result, there



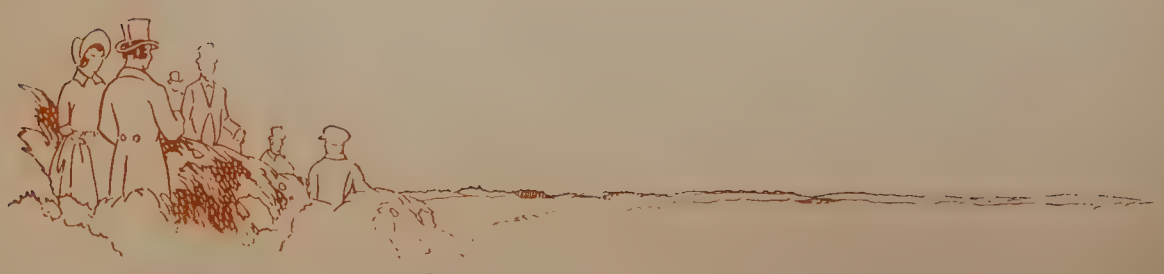
is no doubt that this constant hammering at the gates of Westminster began to produce some effect on the portals of that almost impregnable citadel.

Meanwhile Papineau in Lower Canada, and Mackenzie in Upper Canada, commenced their lamentable rebellion, and greatly embarrassed Nova Scotia in her efforts to secure, by peaceful methods, the reforms these hotheads sought by the sword. The leaders of the Lower Canadian extremists had written Howe asking his co-operation. They had frankly explained to the Nova Scotian leader that their ultimate aim was separation from England, and the establishment of republican institutions. Howe replied in terms of stinging condemnation and disapproval; above all he was a Canadian who was loyal, and would ever remain loyal, to Britain.

On another occasion, when a difficulty in settling the Maine-New Brunswick boundary seemed to threaten armed American invasion of a certain portion of New Brunswick, Howe was the first in the Nova Scotian Assembly to tender to the Government "the united support of myself and my followers in any measure providing for defence." He was a whole-hearted patriot, this leader of the Reform Party.

Howe had joined Falkland's ministry, but he was never happy among his associates in the inner circle of Government House. Possibly he should never have accepted a position in the Governor's ministry. The people did not like it; his adherents were restless at the spectacle of their champion in such close association with officialdom.

Six strenuous years in the Assembly had enhanced Howe's reputation among the populace; a vast majority

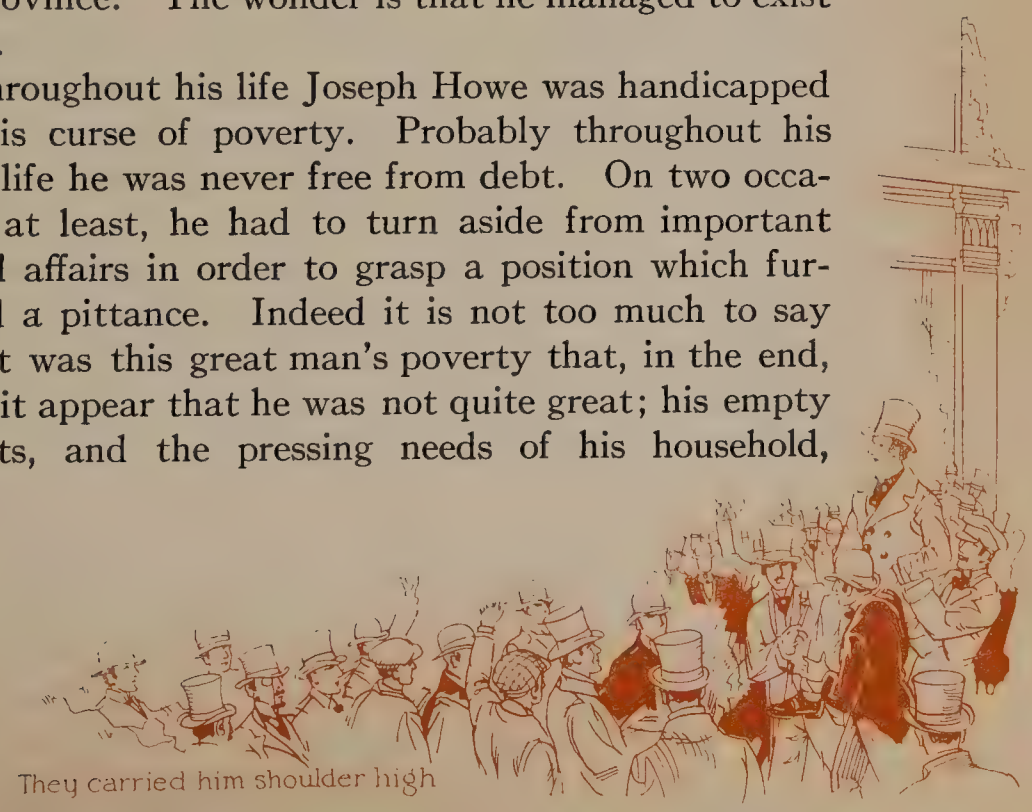


of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia were his devoted followers. His boldness and splendid audacity appealed to the multitude, even to a greater degree than his eloquence inspired them. He was the idol of the province, and his followers were saddened by the spectacle of their idol established in the temple he was pledged to destroy.

In addition to his ministerial appointment, for a very brief period, Howe held office as the Speaker of the House; then, in 1842, he accepted the position of collector of customs of Halifax.

The reason for his acceptance of this appointment is obvious. Howe was a poor man; indeed, apart from the profit he received from the *Nova Scotian*, he was absolutely without means. During the years of his activity in the House, he had been forced to dispose of his paper to others, so that if he received any income from that source at all, it must have been an insignificant sum. He had the expenses of his home, and a growing family, to meet; also he had to pay for his prolonged political tours when campaigning throughout the province. The wonder is that he managed to exist at all.

Throughout his life Joseph Howe was handicapped by this curse of poverty. Probably throughout his adult life he was never free from debt. On two occasions, at least, he had to turn aside from important official affairs in order to grasp a position which furnished a pittance. Indeed it is not too much to say that it was this great man's poverty that, in the end, made it appear that he was not quite great; his empty pockets, and the pressing needs of his household,



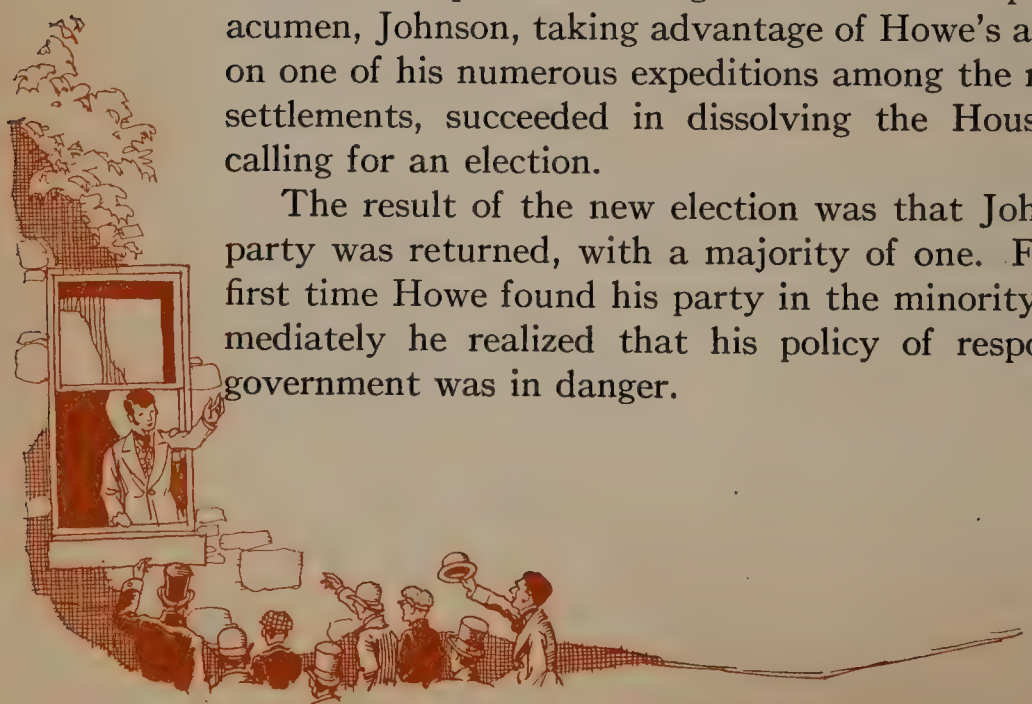
They carried him shoulder high

on more than one occasion, delivered him to his enemies.

Until the autumn of '43, although Falkland's chief minister, Mr. Johnson, was nominally the leader of the House, Howe's followers were in the majority. But, during that year, Joseph had the misfortune to offend various religious bodies—especially the Baptists. There existed at that time four or five important colleges, each an important educational centre. These were distinct establishments, divided from each other by differences of religious denomination. There were already Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian colleges; and at this time the Baptists proposed to erect another detached establishment. Howe brought forward a proposition that all these institutions should be joined into one central institution: a great non-sectarian university, open to students of all creeds and denominations. In advocating this idea he somehow managed to offend a large number of devoted sectarians, especially the Baptists. And the Nonconformists generally had been among his strongest supporters.

Nothing came of Howe's idea of the non-sectarian university, except that his advocacy of the project affected his political strength. With keen political acumen, Johnson, taking advantage of Howe's absence on one of his numerous expeditions among the remote settlements, succeeded in dissolving the House and calling for an election.

The result of the new election was that Johnson's party was returned, with a majority of one. For the first time Howe found his party in the minority. Immediately he realized that his policy of responsible government was in danger.



Howe addressed the people from his window

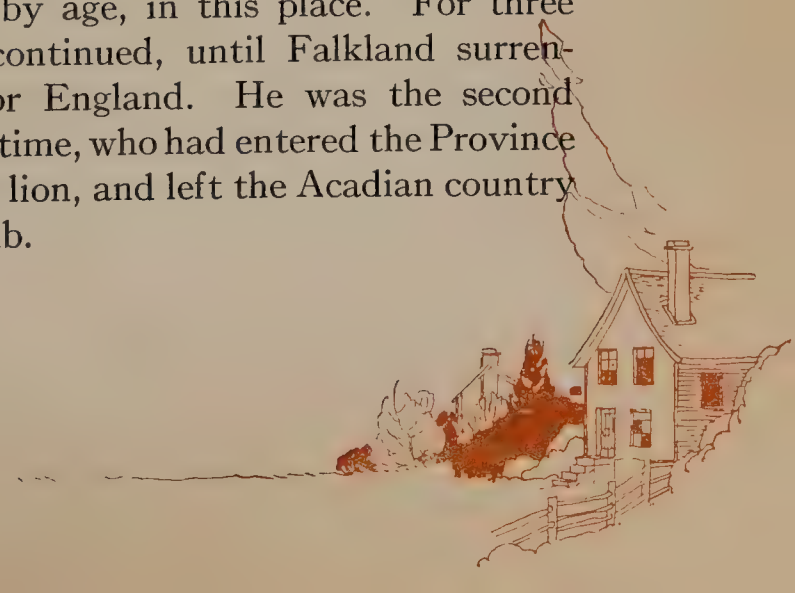
Naturally, the victory, small as it was, inspired Johnson and the Governor, to a feeling of greater independence. The "popular" party was obviously not so popular as they had imagined. Both these gentlemen to some extent presumed on this illusion; they made one or two arbitrary appointments to the council, and generally adopted a dictatorial attitude.

Falkland's conduct became too autocratic, and his manner, overbearing. It was obvious that he had determined to carry on the government in his own despotic fashion.

Howe resigned from the council; he also abandoned the customs collectorship. The new proprietor of the *Nova Scotian* offered him the editorship of his old paper, and the offer was accepted. With his hands free of all responsibility save that which was due to his paper, and to his constituents, Howe plunged into the last round of the fight for responsible government.

Forthwith he commenced an attack on Johnson and Falkland which, for skill and vitriolic bitterness, transcended even his passages with Colin Campbell. The noble lord retaliated, as far as he could. Howe pounded away, with the written and the spoken word; with pamphlet and rhetoric, he attacked the noble and rather pompous lord.

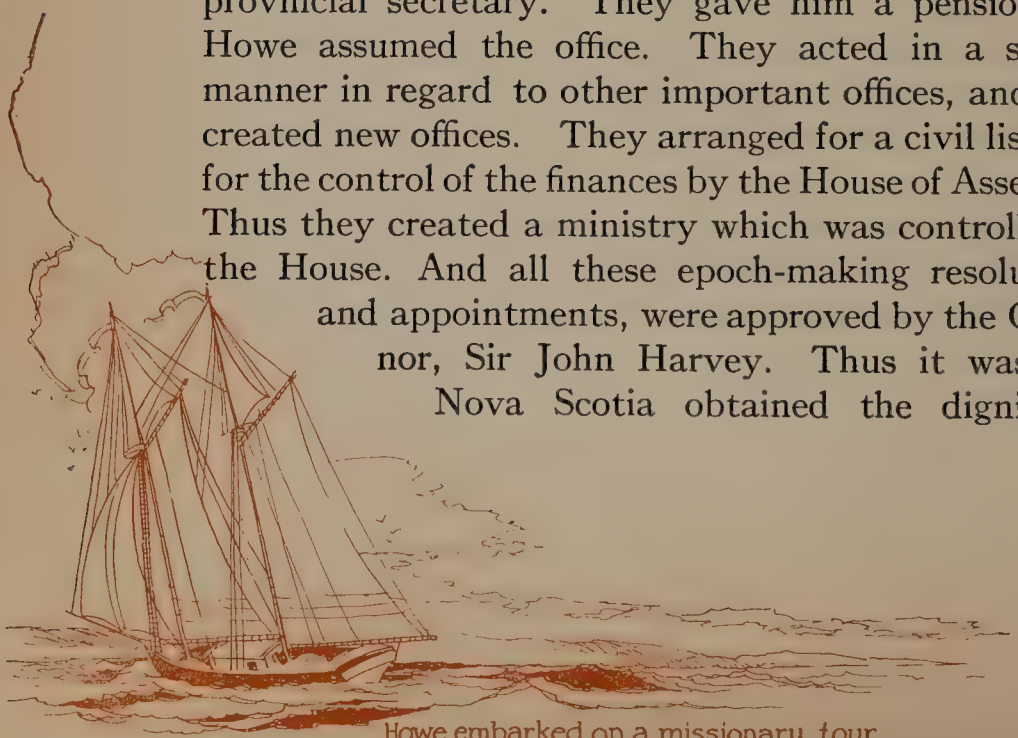
There is no need for us to go into all the details, more or less dulled by age, in this place. For three years the struggle continued, until Falkland surrendered, and sailed for England. He was the second Governor, in Howe's time, who had entered the Province of Nova Scotia like a lion, and left the Acadian country in the guise of a lamb.



Throughout these three years of opposition, Howe had not spent all his time in bandying recriminations with Falkland and Johnson. He had also wooed the province once more, and had succeeded in re-establishing his old popularity. Also he had published much fine writing in his paper, and delivered a multitude of eloquent speeches in the larger centres.

In August, '56, the new Governor, Sir John Harvey, arrived; he soon proved that he was the proper type of man for the difficult position. A year later there was a general election, and the Reform Party was returned with a handsome majority.

Howe did not assume the official leadership of the House; this office he dedicated to James Uniacke, a man of wealth, influence, and long experience in public affairs. As we have seen, at that time most of the offices, which now fall automatically to a government, to be filled by the ministers of the government, were held permanently by officials appointed by the Governor. Howe's party immediately altered this. They passed a resolution in the House, for instance, retiring Sir Rupert George, who was the perpetual provincial secretary. They gave him a pension and Howe assumed the office. They acted in a similar manner in regard to other important offices, and they created new offices. They arranged for a civil list, and for the control of the finances by the House of Assembly. Thus they created a ministry which was controlled by the House. And all these epoch-making resolutions, and appointments, were approved by the Governor, Sir John Harvey. Thus it was that Nova Scotia obtained the dignity of



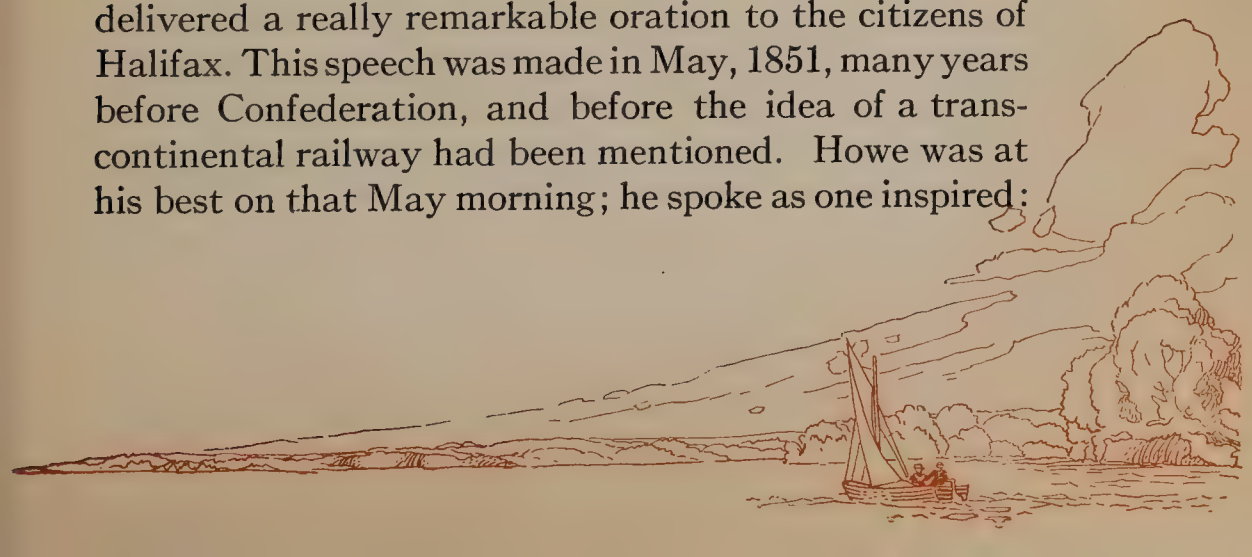
Howe embarked on a missionary tour

responsible government. So it was that Joseph Howe gave to Nova Scotia her political independence.

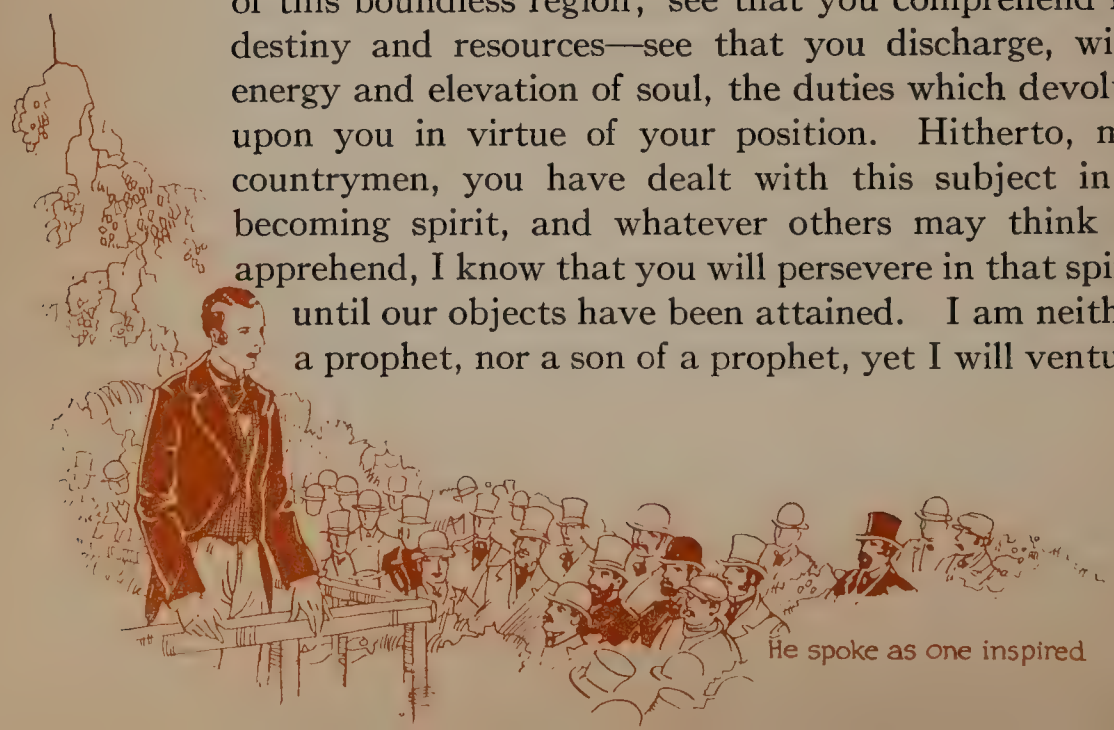
From this time Howe ceased to be a political firebrand. He became a statesman, and practically the head of the state.

His next absorbing interest was railway development. In the House, and in the press, he preached the doctrine of railway construction. There was little opposition to his proposals of development in this direction, but a diversity of ideas as to methods, routes and so on. Also there was the tremendous difficulty of finance. Missions were sent to England, without avail; and finally Howe made the journey himself, and made a great impression on the Home Government. Westminster agreed to either guarantee a loan, or advance sufficient money from the British treasury, on condition that the railway programme was extended so that it constituted a line of communication between the three provinces. The Government agreed to financially assist the other two provinces to the same extent as it had arranged with Nova Scotia.

On his return to Halifax, it became necessary for Howe to embark on a railway missionary tour to convert the other two provinces, Canada and New Brunswick, in order to present his own particular ideas in regard to methods, routes and construction. It was just before departing on this missionary journey that he delivered a really remarkable oration to the citizens of Halifax. This speech was made in May, 1851, many years before Confederation, and before the idea of a transcontinental railway had been mentioned. Howe was at his best on that May morning; he spoke as one inspired:



"With such a territory as this to overrun, organize and improve, think you that we shall stop even at the western bounds of Canada? Or even at the shores of the Pacific? Vancouver's Island, with its vast coal measures, lies beyond. The beautiful islands of the Pacific and the growing commerce of the ocean, are beyond. Populous China and the rich East, are beyond; and the sails of our children's children will reflect as familiarly the sunbeams of the South, as our sails now brave the angry tempests of the North. The Maritime Provinces, which I now address, are but the Atlantic frontage of this boundless and prolific region, the wharves upon which its business will be transacted, and beside which its rich argosies are to lie. Will you, then, put your hands unitedly, and with order, intelligence and energy, to this great work? Refuse, and you are recreants to every principle which lies at the base of your country's prosperity and advancement; refuse, and the Deity's hand-writing upon land and sea, is to you unintelligible language; refuse, and Nova Scotia, instead of occupying the foreground as she now does, should have been thrown back at least behind the Rocky Mountains. God has planted your country in the front of this boundless region; see that you comprehend its destiny and resources—see that you discharge, with energy and elevation of soul, the duties which devolve upon you in virtue of your position. Hitherto, my countrymen, you have dealt with this subject in a becoming spirit, and whatever others may think or apprehend, I know that you will persevere in that spirit until our objects have been attained. I am neither a prophet, nor a son of a prophet, yet I will venture



He spoke as one inspired

to predict that in five years we shall make the journey hence to Quebec and Montreal, and home through Portland and St. John, by rail; and I believe that *many in this room will live to hear the whistle of the steam engine in the passes of the Rocky Mountains, and to make the journey from Halifax in five or six days.*"

As was the case later in the negotiations for the construction of the C.P.R., there arose a great discordant chorus among the railway builders. Half a dozen important men had half a dozen different ideas, schemes, routes. Howe continued negotiations until August, '52, when he decided to construct his line in Nova Scotia irrespective of the action of either of the other provinces. An order-in-council was passed authorizing the construction to proceed as government work, and shortly afterwards Howe proceeded to London, and arranged for a loan of one million pounds with Baring Brothers.

He returned to Halifax and there had to meet with considerable opposition from an influential group in the House of Assembly, whose timidity, in the absence of their chief in England, had developed into a devastating disease. It was not until 1854 that work of construction actually began.

And so the policy of railway development was inaugurated in Nova Scotia. Simultaneously with this, the nominal head of the Government was forced, by ill health, to retire to private life. This left it open for Howe to assume the titular, as well as the practical, headship of affairs; and it was the general desire of the state that he should do so.

But alas! The great man's personal position once

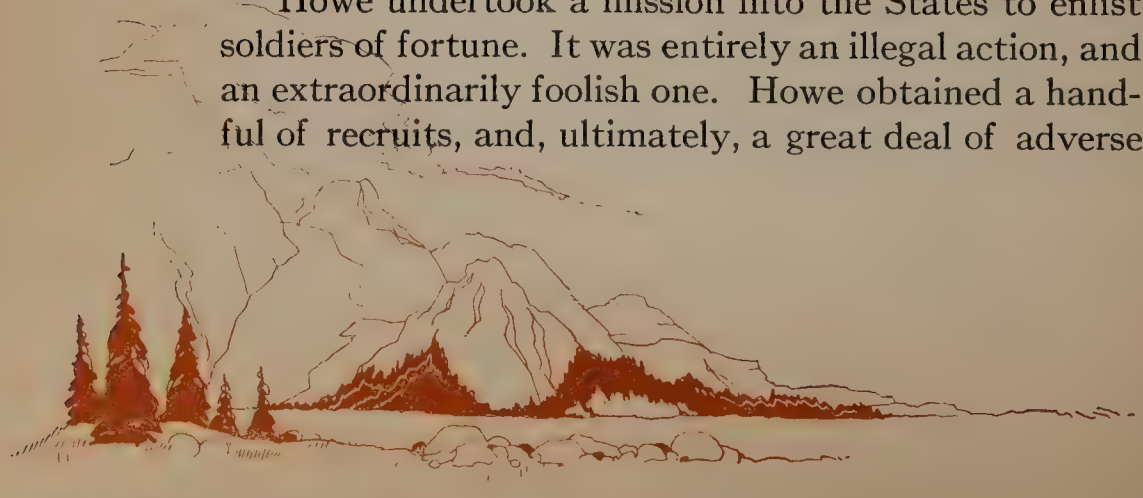


more intervened. Poverty had been hammering at his door throughout the years he had been so splendidly playing his part in consolidating a province, and building an Empire. Such work is magnificent, but unremunerative. So, when it was determined that the chairman of the board of railway commissioners should be a permanent official, with a salary of seven hundred pounds a year, Howe felt bound to take the position. The poverty of his home, and the needs of his family, demanded the sacrifice.

Therefore a certain Mr. William Young, at Howe's suggestion, was called upon to form an administration, while Joseph betook himself to a railway construction camp. He led his gangs vigorously, and with great cheerfulness; no doubt composing suitable chanties for the crowbar men, and camp fire songs for the forest clearers.

In '55 the echoes of the Crimean War began to reach Nova Scotia, and the disasters to the English, largely due to the cold Russian climate, led the Westminster authorities to think of the suitability of the men of the Westland, to combat the rigours of the European snows. A foreign enlistment act was passed in London, and the Governor of Nova Scotia was invited to assist in obtaining recruits. This official in turn appealed to Howe. The patriotic instinct of the railway commissioner responded, though as a man of common sense he should have held aloof.

Howe undertook a mission into the States to enlist soldiers of fortune. It was entirely an illegal action, and an extraordinarily foolish one. Howe obtained a handful of recruits, and, ultimately, a great deal of adverse

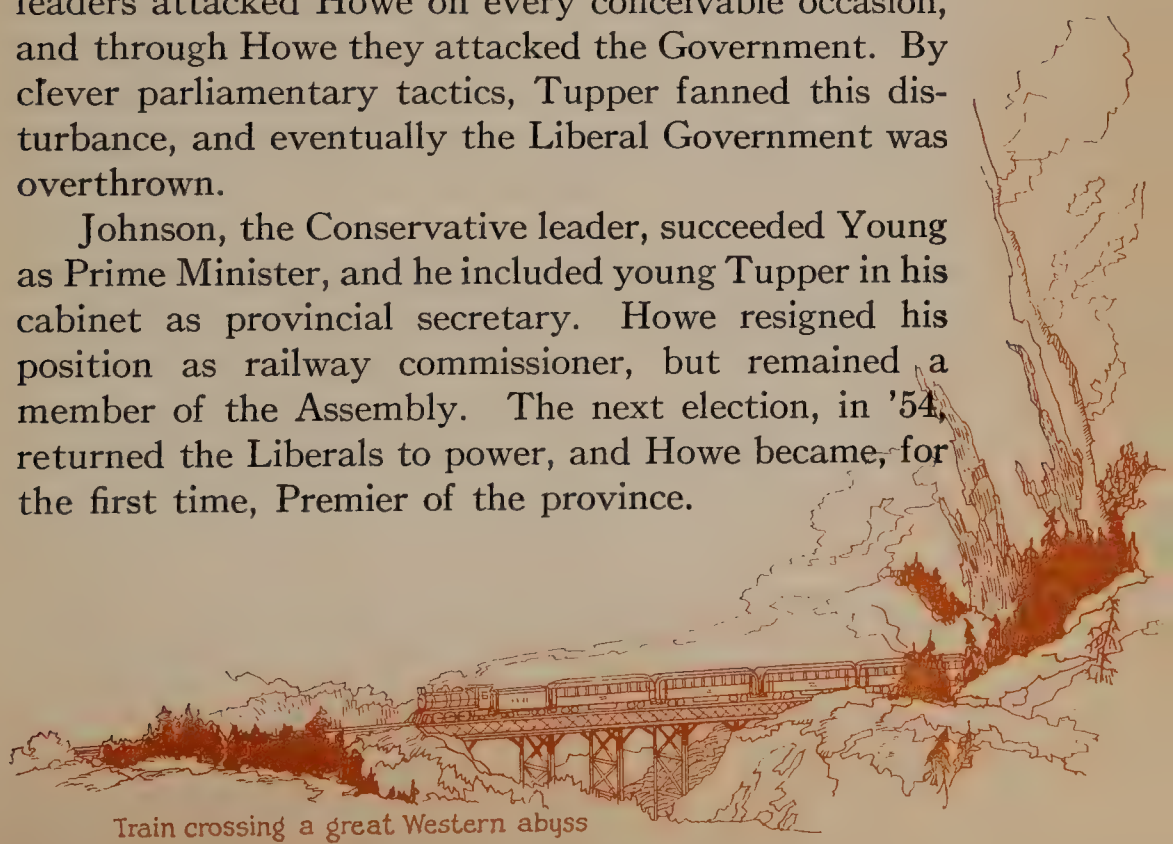


criticism, which he probably deserved. Also he greatly offended the Irish people, both in America and in Nova Scotia. The British Minister at Washington was dismissed from office because he assisted Howe, and England washed her hands of the whole business, leaving the scapegoats to their unhappy fate.

While Howe was in America on this recruiting campaign, the term of the legislature expired. This did not cause him any anxiety, since he imagined his seat in Cumberland was impregnable. When at last he returned to take his part in the election he found that a young doctor, Tupper by name, was opposing him. Howe's amusement changed to chagrin when the despised young doctor defeated him at the poll, and, for the moment, left the idol of Nova Scotia minus a public pedestal. He returned to the House after a few months, elected by acclamation in Hants County, in the first bye-election of the session.

The hostility of the Irish, gained in the recruiting campaign, became a factor of importance. Their leaders attacked Howe on every conceivable occasion, and through Howe they attacked the Government. By clever parliamentary tactics, Tupper fanned this disturbance, and eventually the Liberal Government was overthrown.

Johnson, the Conservative leader, succeeded Young as Prime Minister, and he included young Tupper in his cabinet as provincial secretary. Howe resigned his position as railway commissioner, but remained a member of the Assembly. The next election, in '54, returned the Liberals to power, and Howe became, for the first time, Premier of the province.



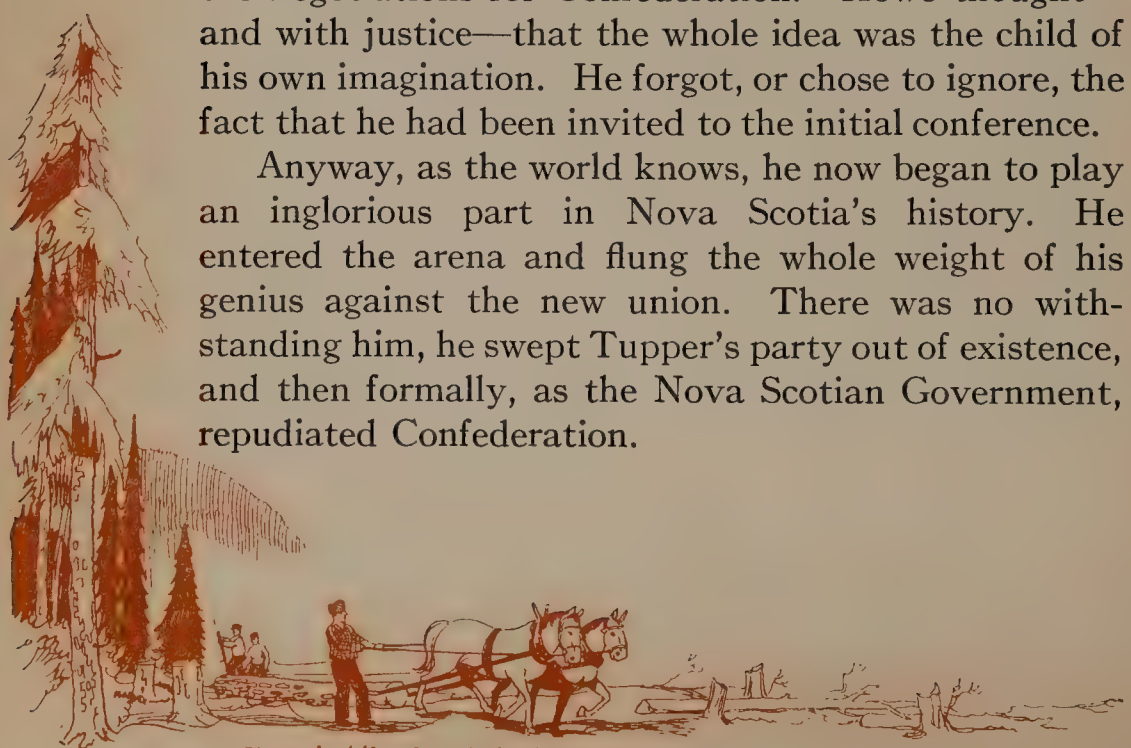
Train crossing a great Western abyss

But he was a harassed man, harassed by debts and harassed by poverty. He sought employment, Imperial employment at a proper wage. He petitioned England, and at long last was appointed fishery commissioner, on behalf of Great Britain, for carrying out the provisions of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. He could not afford to be a Prime Minister, so he became a fishery commissioner.

It was during Howe's occupancy of the fishery commissionership that Tupper led Nova Scotia in the direction of Confederation. Howe was invited to the various conferences, but his official duties precluded the possibility of his attendance. Indeed he had almost decided to retire from political life. A New York journal had made him an offer of a well paid editorship, and he was seriously considering the acceptance of this, when he realized, suddenly—as one who had for a long time been sleeping—that Canadian Confederation was an accomplished fact.

There is no doubt Howe was extremely jealous of Tupper, and the great part the Doctor had played in the negotiations for Confederation. Howe thought—and with justice—that the whole idea was the child of his own imagination. He forgot, or chose to ignore, the fact that he had been invited to the initial conference.

Anyway, as the world knows, he now began to play an inglorious part in Nova Scotia's history. He entered the arena and flung the whole weight of his genius against the new union. There was no withstanding him, he swept Tupper's party out of existence, and then formally, as the Nova Scotian Government, repudiated Confederation.



Clearing the forest for the railway

His attitude was hopelessly foolish from the beginning. He knew he was playing a losing hand, though he went to Westminster and petitioned the Home Government to allow Nova Scotia to remain outside Confederation—to continue her existence as an isolated province.

History tells us how he lost. Of how John A. Macdonald visited him and lured him into his cabinet at Ottawa. We have read of the pitiful scorn hurled at him by those who had loved and followed him.

It was as though the fire of his genius had burned out.

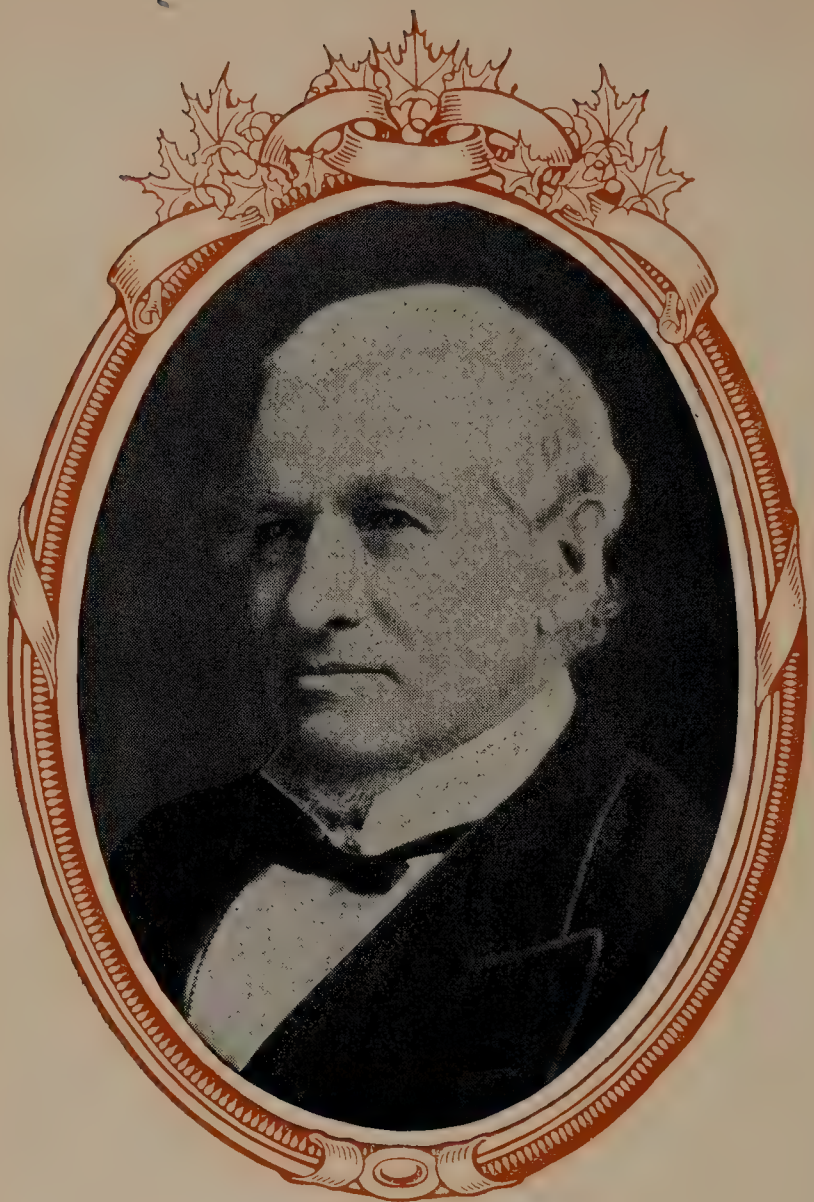
He was no great success at Ottawa. Macdonald kept him there mainly in order that he might keep a watchful eye on him. When the danger period had passed, and the Confederation ship sailed on comparatively calm waters, Howe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia; and in that office he died.

We have not hesitated to record the failings of Joseph Howe, or omitted adequate mention of his faults. To his virtues we have done but scant justice, and of his genius these pages contain no account.

Howe's genius was as fragrant as the scent of the hedgerow, and as elusive. To understand the man you must read him; read his speeches and his prose, and most of all, his verse.

A very Great Canadian, and a very great and lovable man, Joseph Howe supported for many years the burdens of a great province. He gave to Nova Scotia political liberty, and established for her a railway system; retaining for himself, poverty.

Sir Alexander Galt



Sir Alexander Galt

1817 - 1893

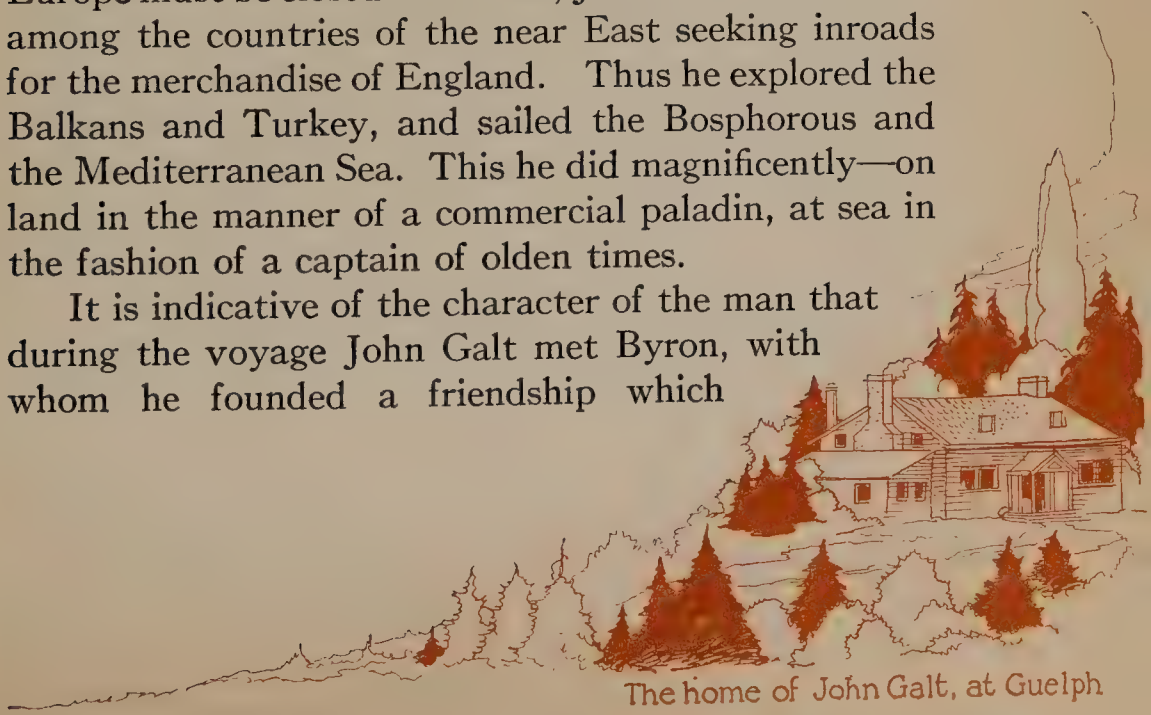
Sir Alexander Galt

In many respects Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt was the most amazing of all those amazing sons of Scotland who assisted in the confederation of the scattered provinces of British North America.

The history of the Dominion is filled with the names of great men. In that history the Scottish name of Galt appears, in large letters, on at least two pages. For Sir Alexander was the splendid son of a brilliant sire, and each of these Galts worked for Canada. John Galt, the sire, was a writer of books and a dreamer of dreams; he was a man of rich imagination, whose active mind frequently led him in the direction of practical affairs and to participation in commercial adventure. Also he was an explorer and a pathfinder, eager to accept the hazardous chance so long as that chance affected only his own affairs, his own existence.

When Napoleon ordained that the markets of all Europe must be closed to Britain, John Galt adventured among the countries of the near East seeking inroads for the merchandise of England. Thus he explored the Balkans and Turkey, and sailed the Bosphorous and the Mediterranean Sea. This he did magnificently—on land in the manner of a commercial paladin, at sea in the fashion of a captain of olden times.

It is indicative of the character of the man that during the voyage John Galt met Byron, with whom he founded a friendship which



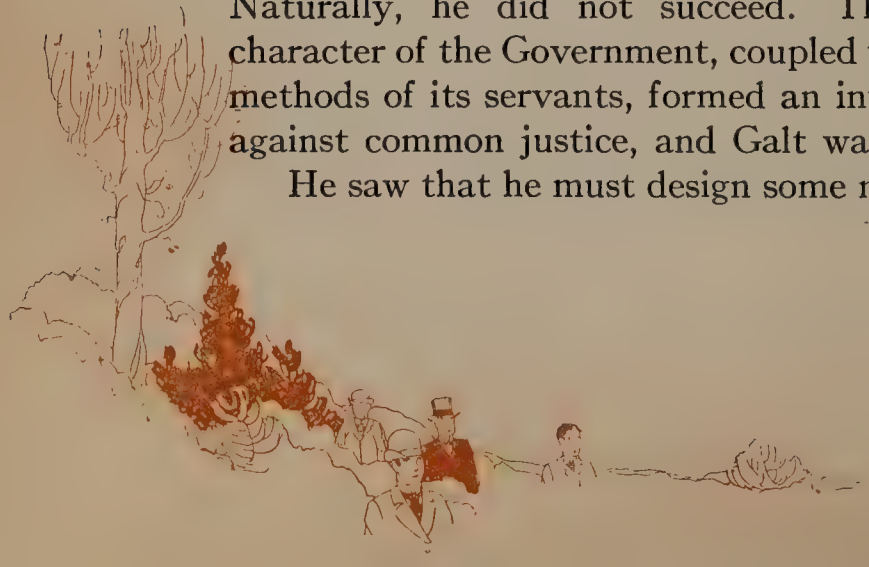
The home of John Galt, at Guelph

resulted, ultimately, in his becoming the poet's biographer. The event of this tour of exploration was merely an episode in the youth of John Galt. Already he had traded in London as a merchant, studied law at Lincoln's Inn, and dabbled a little in literature. When he returned from the Mediterranean he was a mere youngster of twenty-five, but he was also a man of experience and of affairs. Forthwith he married Elizabeth, daughter of a distinguished editor named Alexander Tilloch, of London, and then he settled down seriously to the profession of book writing.

By accident the young author became the agent in London for certain military people of Upper Canada who possessed claims for compensation against the British Government.

In this way—by this accident—the Galt family became associated with Canada. The story of the battle royal waged by the romantic novelist in his endeavour to obtain satisfaction for his clients is, unfortunately, not for inclusion here. He encountered all the exasperating opposition usual in such cases. He fought the flaccid but baffling officials in charge of the circumlocution departments entrenched in Whitehall to preserve the Secretaries of State from all activity, or any other kind of annoyance, and he waged war against that ignorance of all practical affairs which in those days prevailed in Downing Street. Naturally, he did not succeed. The parsimonious character of the Government, coupled with the dilatory methods of its servants, formed an invincible bulwark against common justice, and Galt was defeated.

He saw that he must design some method by which

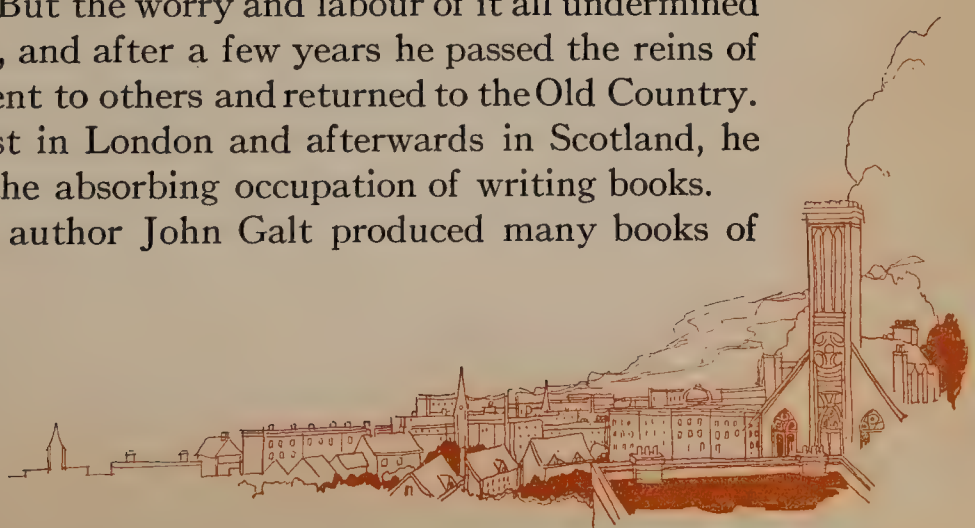


his friends in Canada might receive compensation, officially, and without disturbing the contents of the public purse. In this dilemma he cast his eyes upon the vast land preserves, known as crown reserves, in Upper Canada. If he could obtain permission to dispose of a portion of this great territory, the proceeds might be devoted to the just demands of his clients.

In this direction he eventually obtained from the British Government certain concessions, and permissions, and red-taped documents. These potential grants really constituted the beginning of great and troublesome adventure for John Galt, though ultimately they resulted in the formation of the Canada Company. The story of this company is well known. Its activities resulted in the clearing of vast acres of forest land, and the creation of new hamlets and towns, including that beautiful City of Guelph. John Galt proved himself to be a colonizer, as well as a land agent and the founder of cities and settlements. He continued to be a sturdy enemy of hampering officialdom and a strenuous fighter in any just cause. In Canada he made several enemies and many friends, and he gained the enduring hatred of members of that powerful party of obstructionists who upheld various descriptions of selfish interests.

His work in Canada was successful; he did much good work for the province then known as Upper Canada. But the worry and labour of it all undermined his health, and after a few years he passed the reins of management to others and returned to the Old Country. There, first in London and afterwards in Scotland, he resumed the absorbing occupation of writing books.

As an author John Galt produced many books of



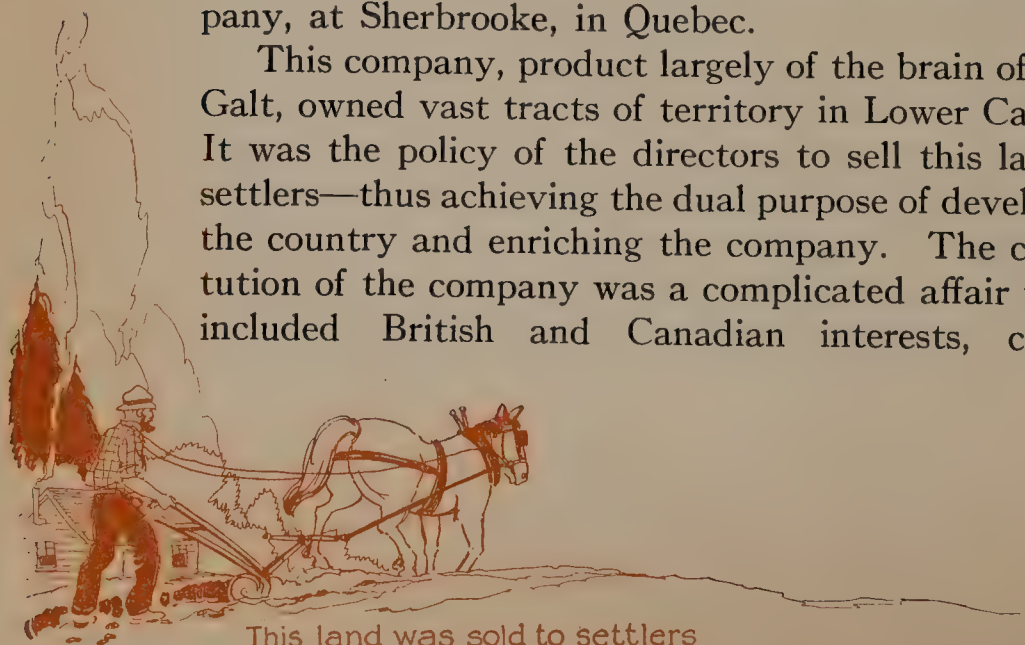
Chelsea in London, England – Galt's birthplace

high renown; as adventurer, as colonizer and man of commerce he was magnificent; and, as a man, he was a romanticist of courtly bearing and noble character.

The third son of John Galt was born at Chelsea in London in the year 1817. He was called Alexander Tilloch—the name of his mother's father. For six years he lived in Chelsea and then his family carried him with them to their new home at Elkgrove, Edinburgh. Before the lad was twelve years old, he accompanied his family to Canada, journeying by way of New York. He travelled a little in Upper Canada, and then spent two years with his two brothers attending school at Chambly, in the Province of Quebec—or, as it was then named, Lower Canada.

At thirteen Alexander was already back in England where for several years he lived with his family in London. The literary character of his father, combined with a certain inherited ability for composition, turned the boy's thoughts to writing as a profession worthy of his talents. But, as was the case with John Galt, the urge for literary creation was not overwhelming in Alexander, and he turned his attention to business. At the age of eighteen he took ship for Canada and entered the office of the British American Land Company, at Sherbrooke, in Quebec.

This company, product largely of the brain of John Galt, owned vast tracts of territory in Lower Canada. It was the policy of the directors to sell this land to settlers—thus achieving the dual purpose of developing the country and enriching the company. The constitution of the company was a complicated affair which included British and Canadian interests, certain



This land was sold to settlers

freedoms and certain obligations—an unwieldy medley of clauses calculated to stifle the possibility of success in any commercial enterprise.

Alexander Galt became an assiduous student of the affairs of the company, and, very rapidly, a man of consequence in its direction. The settlers, selected for occupancy of patches of the vast wilderness controlled by the company, proved to be of an unsatisfactory character. They fell into arrears in the payment of monies due for interest on loans made to assist in the purchase of land.

Alexander Galt was sent to rally the new settlers, and obtain payment of monies due. This he found to be an impossible task—no cash could be obtained where no cash existed. Instead of furnishing his directors with the money so much desired, he forwarded them a report—an analysis of the situation. This report proved to be a document of great value—as valuable as it was disturbing. Galt told his board that everything was wrong; also he proved his points, and suggested remedies. It was a statement of extraordinary merit. As the work of a man in the early twenties it constituted a document worthy of notice on account of the brilliance of its author almost as much as on the value of its presentments. The directors realized, at first dimly, that, though their company might be failing, there existed a young man capable of saving the situation.

In the manner of great concerns, nothing eventuated for a considerable period. The directors hesitated to adopt the revolutionary suggestions made by the brilliant young clerk. But in 1842 they summoned the promising youngster to London to discuss in detail his

shattering report. Probably they were astonished when Galt, proud in the possession of twenty-five years of life and a Napoleonic assurance, calmly offered them a considerable sum of money for a large portion of their land holding. This surely proved that the son of their founder had confidence in his ability to make good his own ideas.

It took the directors several months to consider this new suggestion. Finally they rejected it, preferring to promote Galt, and send him back to Canada to make good his own ideas as a servant of the company.

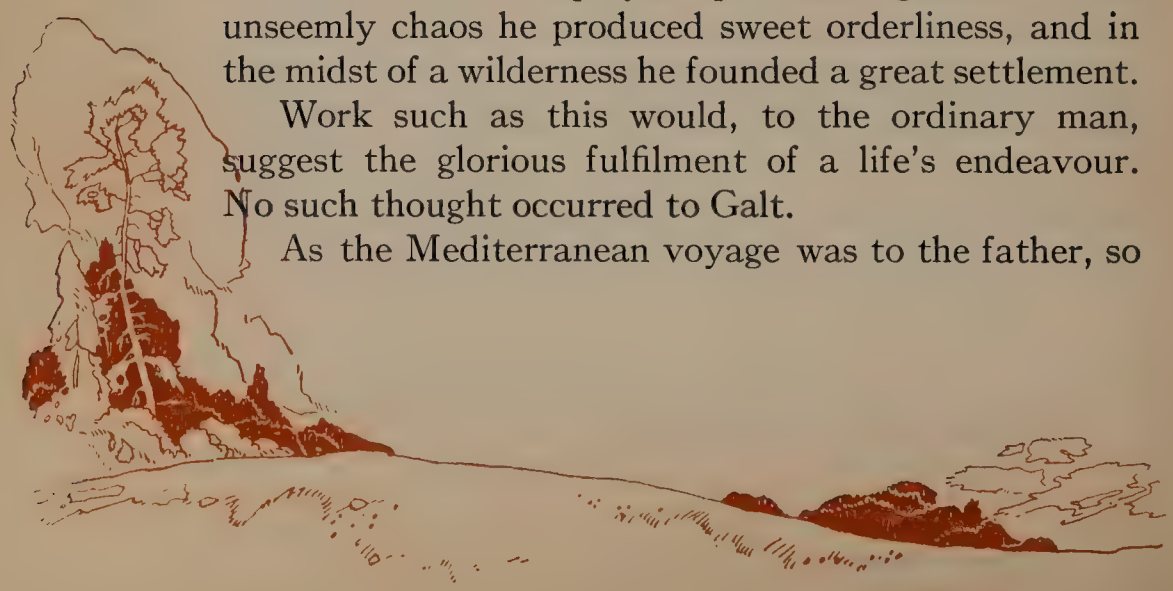
It took him two years to achieve success.

By 1844 Galt had saved the situation, and created for himself a reputation as an administrator and financier of ability, both in England and the Canadas; forthwith he was appointed a commissioner of the company.

Having put the foundations of the company on a proper financial basis, the newly appointed commissioner proceeded to develop his territories. He attracted proper people to his settlements; he found a worthy type of immigrant; he constructed roads and erected mills and warehouses. In every way he assisted the settlers—lent them implements, lent them money; even marketed their produce. As an administrator of the great territory controlled by his company, Alexander Galt displayed profound genius. From unseemly chaos he produced sweet orderliness, and in the midst of a wilderness he founded a great settlement.

Work such as this would, to the ordinary man, suggest the glorious fulfilment of a life's endeavour. No such thought occurred to Galt.

As the Mediterranean voyage was to the father, so

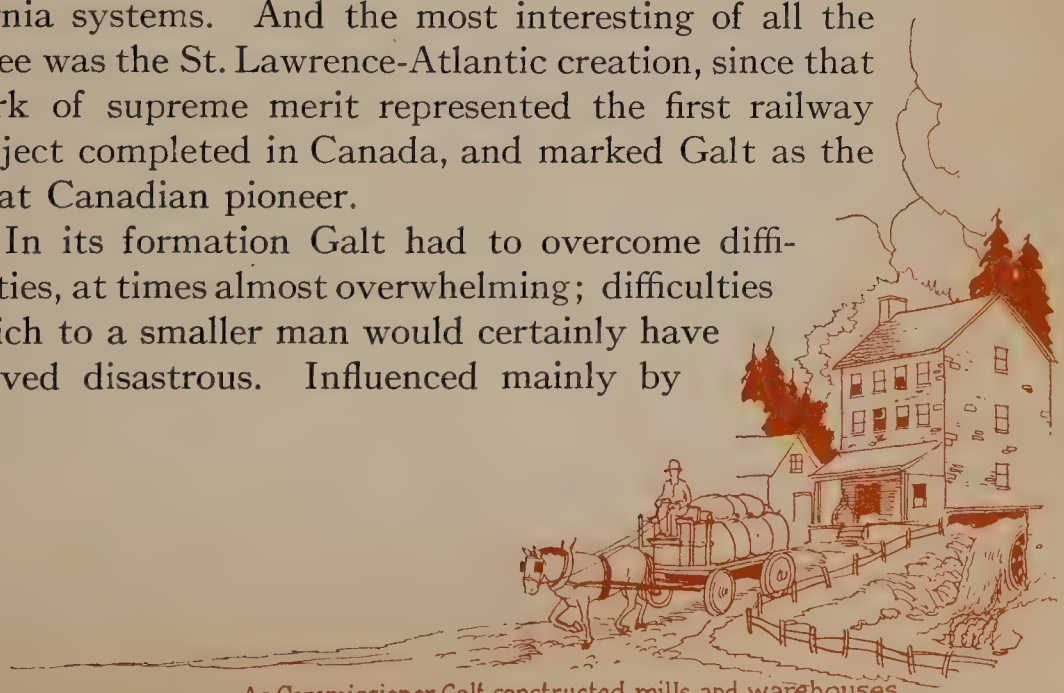


was all this achievement to the son—a mere incident of youth. During the decade of his administration of the company, Galt had been extremely active in various directions. Among other things he had become, pre-eminently, the railway pioneer of Canada. He had entered Parliament, and as a side issue become a recognized financial expert in England and the Canadas.

In the achievement of these things he had not altogether escaped notice as being a diplomat of some distinction. It was probably in the interest of his company that Galt first turned his attention to the construction of railways; the advent of the train was beneficial to his people.

In all, this amazing man was responsible for the construction of three main lines; the trace of his railway handiwork stretched from Sarnia to Portland, Maine. The Grand Trunk System for whose failures he was in no sense responsible—he fought against the extravagances and absurdities of the initial history of the line, tooth and nail—was in the end saved by Galt. But we do not count this company among the three systems he founded. Those three were the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic, Montreal to Kingston, and Toronto to Sarnia systems. And the most interesting of all the three was the St. Lawrence-Atlantic creation, since that work of supreme merit represented the first railway project completed in Canada, and marked Galt as the great Canadian pioneer.

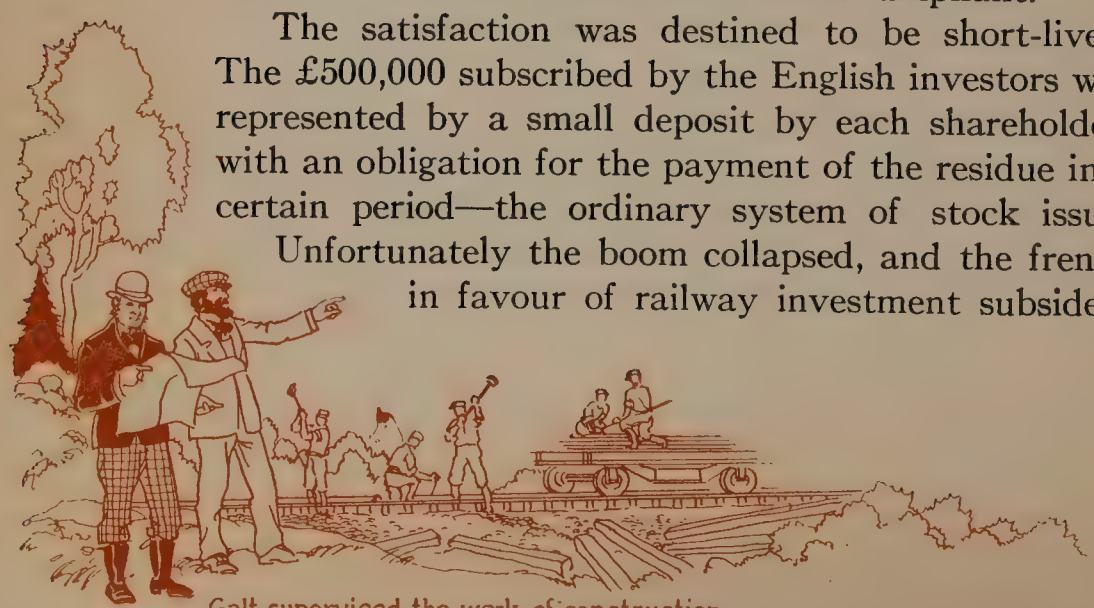
In its formation Galt had to overcome difficulties, at times almost overwhelming; difficulties which to a smaller man would certainly have proved disastrous. Influenced mainly by



As Commissioner Galt constructed mills and warehouses

the needs of his Land Company for more efficient communications, Galt flung himself into the railway movement with his customary thoroughness. Many projects of construction were being considered. The mileage of railway in existence was negligible. The people of the Canadas sought an outlet on the eastern seaboard from Montreal. There were at least two alternative routes, one placing the Atlantic outlet at Boston, the other at Portland, Maine. Galt favoured the Portland route on account of the shorter distance of construction necessary for its completion. He joined the board of a syndicate designed to build this system. The Canadian Parliament sanctioned the laying of the St. Lawrence-Atlantic Line at an estimated cost of £600,000. It became necessary to find this large sum of money. One hundred thousand pounds was raised in Montreal, and no further sums could be found. The board of directors placed the matter in the hands of Galt. First he asked the Government to guarantee a bond issue for the remaining half million of money. This was refused. There remained only the alternative of the London market, and so to England Galt proceeded, and in the midst of the railway boom of '45 the young financier disposed of the remaining 500,000 shares, and returned to Montreal satisfied and triumphant.

The satisfaction was destined to be short-lived. The £500,000 subscribed by the English investors was represented by a small deposit by each shareholder, with an obligation for the payment of the residue in a certain period—the ordinary system of stock issue. Unfortunately the boom collapsed, and the frenzy in favour of railway investment subsided.



Galt supervised the work of construction

The reaction was so severe that the shareholders in the Canadian project not only refused to make good their obligations, but demanded repayment of their deposits. Though this was, of course, preposterously unfair, the result was that the promised £500,000 never materialized.

A shock of this magnitude might be counted sufficient to discourage most financiers, but Galt persevered with the good work. He managed to raise a little more money in Montreal; he raised money among the people of his own territory, from the Land Company; and eventually he succeeded in persuading the Canadian Government to give sufficient guarantee to enable him to complete the sum required.

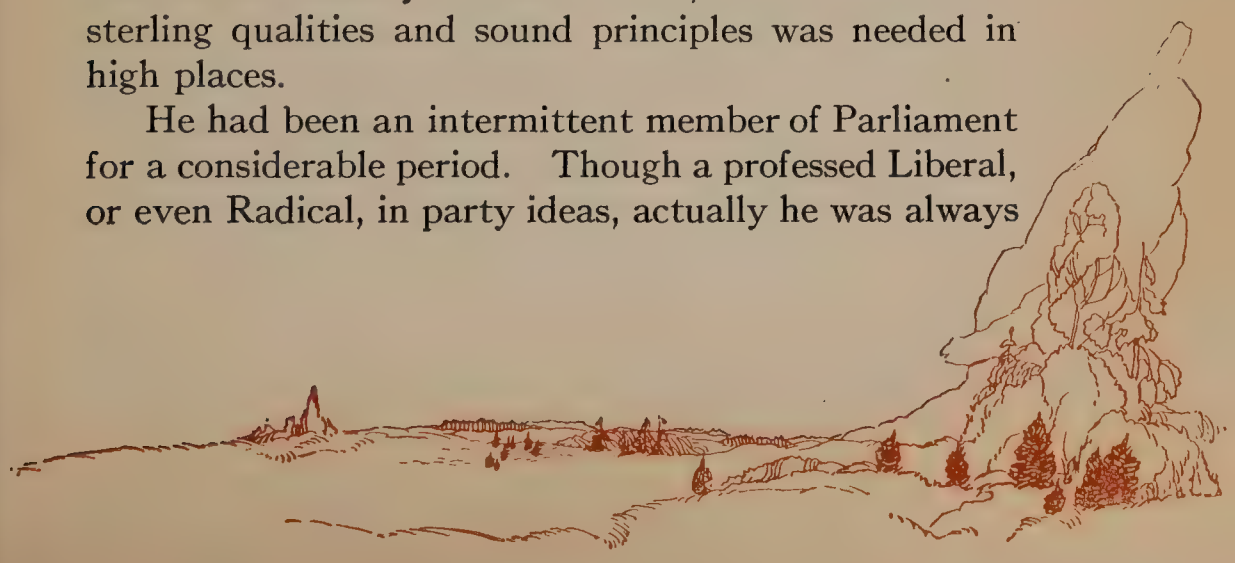
By 1852 the railway was completed.

The completion of this line constituted a personal triumph of the first magnitude for Alexander Galt. It was the first railway built in Canada. Galt not only found the money necessary for its completion, but actually supervised the work of its construction. He accomplished it despite considerable political opposition and the strange jealousy of would-be rival constructors.

When he first undertook this gigantic task Galt was not yet thirty; it was completed in his thirty-fifth year.

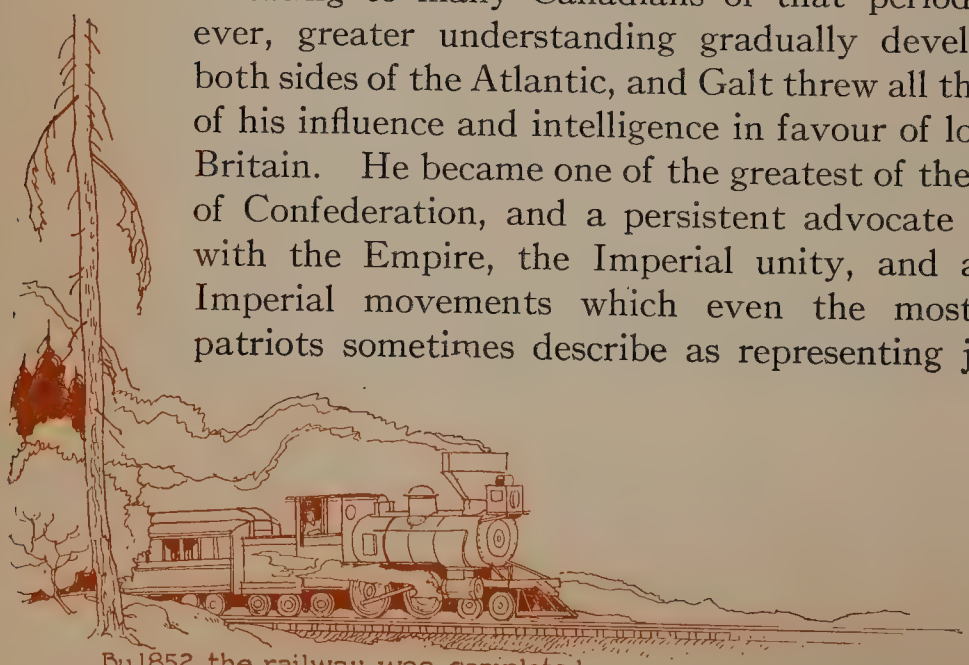
After this first effort in railway construction Galt began to take a larger interest in politics. The condition of the country warranted this, and a man of his sterling qualities and sound principles was needed in high places.

He had been an intermittent member of Parliament for a considerable period. Though a professed Liberal, or even Radical, in party ideas, actually he was always



a man sturdily independent of all parties. He had insufficient time for constructive statecraft until his various business enterprises were completed, or well on their way to completion. Indeed it was not until he took care of the finances of the Canadas in the Macdonald-Cartier Government of 1858 that he attained great prominence in the political field.

Too frequently undue emphasis is given to the alleged "annexation" tendencies of this British-Canadian patriot. It is true that at a certain period Galt favoured the joining of the northern provinces with the United States. In common with a large number of the leading men of all political parties he signed the "declaration in favour" during the serious unsettlement which followed the assault on Lord Elgin, and the destruction of the Montreal Parliament Buildings. This he did, not from disloyalty to Britain, but through loyalty to Canada. The position at that time seemed hopeless—chaotic, incapable of settlement. In fact some of the leading statesmen of Great Britain were not only indifferent about Canada's future, but were openly asserting that the country's destiny was with the United States—an attitude of mind that was most irritating to many Canadians of that period. However, greater understanding gradually developed on both sides of the Atlantic, and Galt threw all the weight of his influence and intelligence in favour of loyalty to Britain. He became one of the greatest of the Fathers of Confederation, and a persistent advocate of trade with the Empire, the Imperial unity, and all those Imperial movements which even the most ardent patriots sometimes describe as representing jingoism.



By 1852 the railway was completed

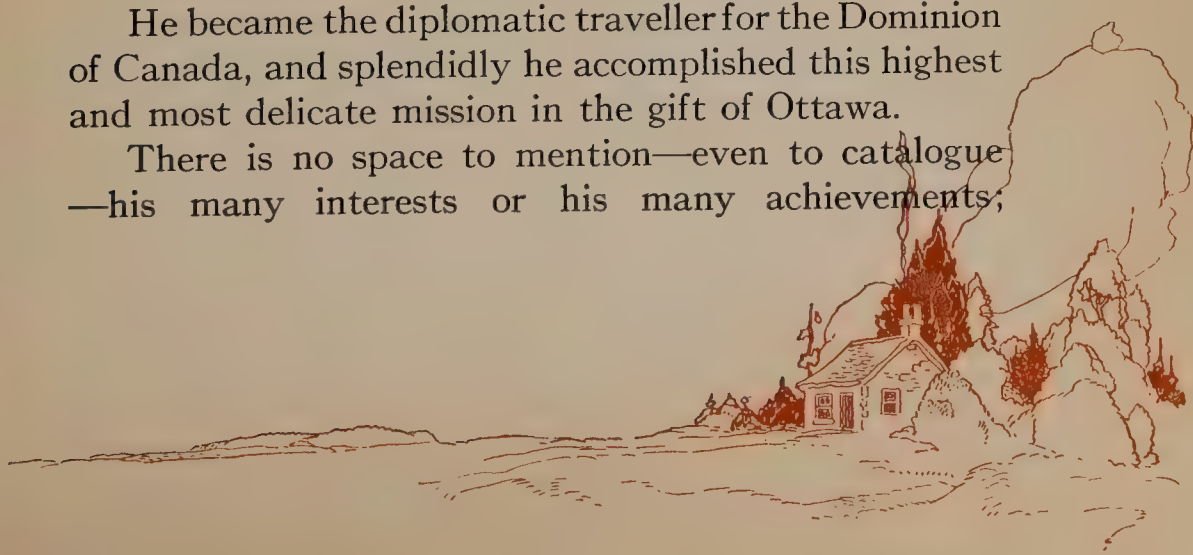
Galt's life proved his intense patriotism. In this place it is not necessary to describe his importance in the councils which eventually gave birth to Canada as an united nation and an integral part of the Empire. That has been described elsewhere. It was Galt who came with the practical policy of union. The ideal was floating like a mist in the minds of a dozen men in that old Parliament House of the Canadas. It was a will-o'-the-wisp, unattainable. Galt with his clear mind evolved substance from shadow, and amidst the darkness of the night pointed to the dawn. It was Galt's genius that he could always from chaos produce order. He produced the practical plan upon which Confederation might be erected, and then assisted in its building. He was in a large measure the architect of our Canadian constitution.

It is for that act that we of Canada owe to Galt our deepest gratitude, though his work as a Minister of Finance entitles him to an outstanding place in our history. He placed the Country on a business basis—just as efficiently as he did his Land Company. The man had a genius for finance.

He worked with and for John A. Macdonald and the others in putting the Canadian house in order, and then, as minister representing the new Dominion, he went abroad throughout the nations and told the world all about the new daughter of the Empire.

He became the diplomatic traveller for the Dominion of Canada, and splendidly he accomplished this highest and most delicate mission in the gift of Ottawa.

There is no space to mention—even to catalogue—his many interests or his many achievements;



achievements both as a public man or as an astounding individual. He was always a loyal son of Canada and of Britain. And he was one of the outstanding men of the Empire—a man great among the greatest even of this wonderful Empire.

Like so many successful men Galt was as happy in his private life as he was distinguished in his public life. In 1848 he married Elliott, daughter of John Torrance of Montreal. After the birth of a son she died, and in 1851 Galt married her younger sister Amy. With his charming wife Galt lived a lifetime of happiness. Undoubtedly Galt owed much to the love and loyalty of this lady who proved a companion and helpmate as well as a devoted wife. She outlived her brilliant husband to whom she gave two sons and eight daughters. So that Galt was the father of eleven children. His eldest son, Elliott, became a distinguished pioneer in the West—indeed he ranks, perhaps, as the greatest of the practical pioneers of the West. His work in Alberta is a matter of national history.

And so we leave this record of Sir Alexander Galt. His Sovereign conferred upon him the honour of the Knighthood of St. Michael and St. George; history confers upon him the higher honour of remembrance.

Scion of an ancient family and of a great race, Alexander Galt was the maker of his own greatness. From the moment he faced the world, a youth of eighteen, alone and unassisted, he encountered difficulties only to overcome them. The merit he was born with he converted into greater merit. He lived splendidly, and died in honour.

Sir Charles Tupper



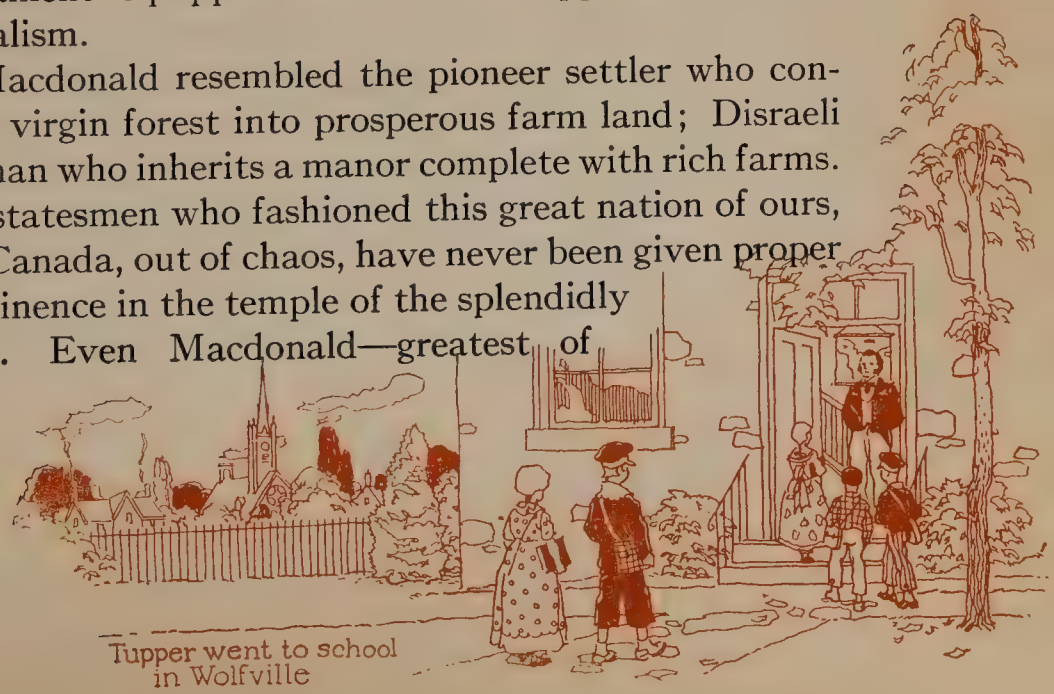
Sir Charles Tupper

1821 - 1915

Sir Charles Tupper

CANADIANS, as a people, suffer from undue modesty in appreciating the measure of the greatness of their own great men. When sitting in judgment on the public men of the last century, our historians are inclined to unduly emphasize the magnitude of alien statesmen at the expense of the leaders of our own country. It is, of course, impossible to measure the relative values of greatness; to say, justly, that Disraeli was a greater man than John A. Macdonald; or that Laurier was smaller than Gladstone. In a newly born country, as Canada was in Macdonald's day, the task of leading is infinitely more difficult, more harassing, than the effort required for conducting the government of a nation, or an empire, ages old in experience and in tradition. A new parliament of a new country is necessarily a very sensitive, highly strung, nervous organization; whereas a parliament already old is already efficient; it is a parliament equipped with all the appurtenances of officialism.

Macdonald resembled the pioneer settler who converts virgin forest into prosperous farm land; Disraeli the man who inherits a manor complete with rich farms. The statesmen who fashioned this great nation of ours, this Canada, out of chaos, have never been given proper prominence in the temple of the splendidly great. Even Macdonald—greatest of



Tupper went to school in Wolfville

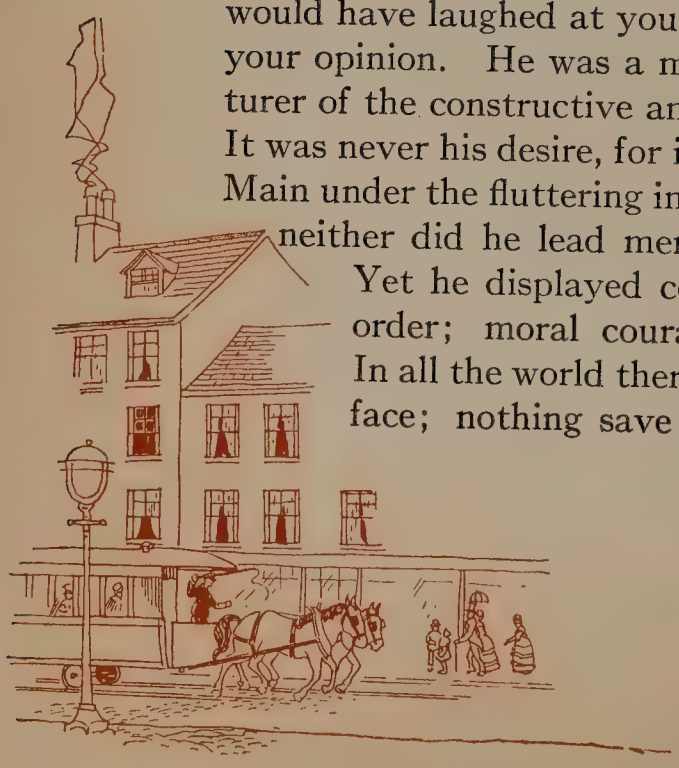
them all—is remembered negligently; his lieutenants are almost forgotten.

Thus Tupper, Sir Charles Tupper, one of the greatest men of his time, is almost forgotten; though less than two decades ago he was still alive, and counted the "grand old man of Canada."

Tupper was Macdonald's chief lieutenant; he was a man without whom Macdonald might have failed; without whom the construction of Canada's first transcontinental railway would have been greatly retarded, and without whom the newly born Confederation might have had a sickly childhood, or even suffered an untimely death. Also he was a great diplomatist; an arbiter, a man gifted in gaining and retaining the confidence of men. One can imagine Macdonald in the throes of a political debacle muttering, wearily but hopefully, "old Tupper will be able to straighten it out."

And on many occasions "old Tupper" did straighten it out; and thus saved Macdonald and Confederation.

Charles Tupper was a very great man, though he would have laughed at you had you told him that was your opinion. He was a man of romance; an adventurer of the constructive and not the destructive type. It was never his desire, for instance, to sail the Spanish Main under the fluttering insecurity of the Jolly Roger; neither did he lead men to death on land or sea. Yet he displayed courage of the very highest order; moral courage and physical courage. In all the world there was nothing he would not face; nothing save personal dishonour.



When Louis Riel, the half-breed, held Fort Garry and threatened death to all white men, Tupper made the long journey to the outlaw's stronghold, and, entering it alone by a most dangerous stratagem, boldly confronted the rebel. In this manner, for a time at least, he averted the catastrophe of an uprising. It was an act of stupendous daring, or to put it more accurately —for "daring" is a tricky word—of cool courage.

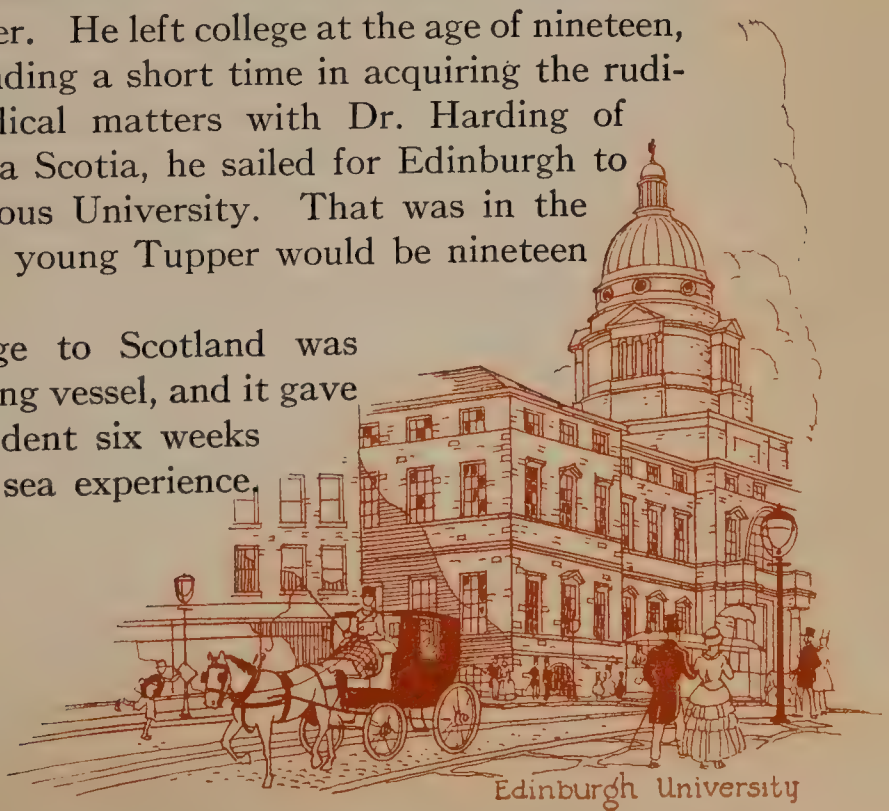
What manner of a person was this man of splendid adventure, this statesman and diplomatist, this man of great romance?

Just an ordinary Canadian—to begin with. Just an ordinary Canadian.

He started with no great advantages; his father was a simple Baptist minister, not a poor man perhaps, but certainly by no means rich—few Baptist ministers become rich.

Charles Tupper went to school at Wolfville, a settlement in Nova Scotia, where, in July, 1821, he was born. He was destined for the medical profession, and his academic studies were influenced in the direction of his future career. He left college at the age of nineteen, and after spending a short time in acquiring the rudiments of medical matters with Dr. Harding of Windsor, Nova Scotia, he sailed for Edinburgh to enter the famous University. That was in the year 1840; so young Tupper would be nineteen years of age.

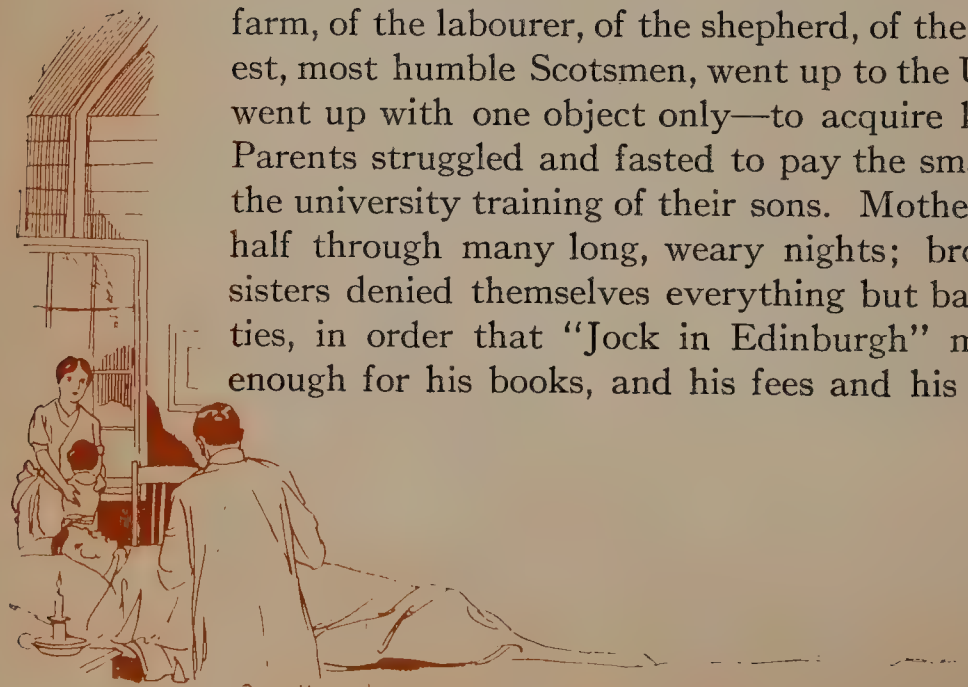
The voyage to Scotland was made in a sailing vessel, and it gave the young student six weeks of interesting sea experience.



Edinburgh University

We must remember that these events occurred nearly a century ago. The Canada Tupper left was not the Canada we know to-day. His native Nova Scotia, though one of the most advanced and developed of the provinces, was something of a wilderness. A place of primeval forests and primitive settlements. There were few roadways and no railways, and "comforts of civilization" as we know them, were not yet invented. The University of Edinburgh, whose medical branch he entered, was also an institution of a nature almost unknown to-day.

In 1840 Edinburgh was filled with students of a most magnificent type. Scotland at that period was rejoicing in a fever for scholarship. The universities were peopled by young men who lived on "lectures and oatmeal." There was little time given to anything but learning. The Scottish students went to the University to conquer ignorance and achieve scholarship. They worked hard, and lived hard. Many a student possessed nothing but a few books, and a sack of oatmeal. It was a magnificent period for Scotland; the period when many men who ultimately became great savants were being trained. Sons of the manse, of the farm, of the labourer, of the shepherd, of the very poorest, most humble Scotsmen, went up to the University; went up with one object only—to acquire knowledge. Parents struggled and fasted to pay the small fees for the university training of their sons. Mothers stitched half through many long, weary nights; brothers and sisters denied themselves everything but bare necessities, in order that "Jock in Edinburgh" might have enough for his books, and his fees and his oatmeal.



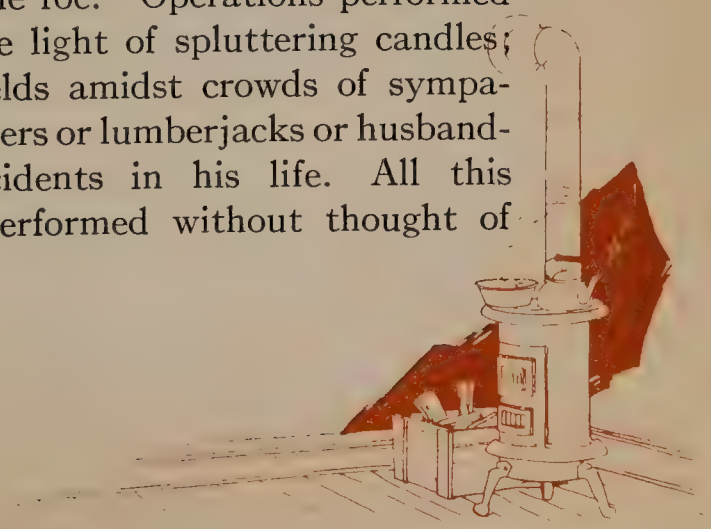
Operations were performed on kitchen tables

Thus most of the young men at this seat of learning were supported by great sacrifice, and were "on their honour" to succeed. Few failed to justify the sacrifice, or to uphold their own honour. Edinburgh turned out great men by the score, and among them was Tupper; Dr. Charles Tupper, a worthy son of Canada, and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh.

Young Dr. Tupper returned to Amherst in Cumberland, Nova Scotia, and there he started in practice as a surgeon, continuing for twelve years to follow that most arduous profession, under the most arduous conditions imaginable.

Picture what the life of a country doctor must have been in the back blocks of Nova Scotia nearly a century ago. Patients scores of miles apart; hours spent in all weathers on horseback in summer or in a sleigh amidst the snow and ice of winter. Worse than the snow, Tupper used to say, was the mud; heavy rain would convert the unpaved roads into an infinitude of mud; the country became a sticky morass.

But—a doctor must obey every call. Tupper performed miracles of endurance, and of courage. Physical courage in battling against snow, wind and ice amidst unrecognizable pathless wastes, alone, in the darkness of terrible nights; moral courage in fighting death, single-handed, amidst conditions where the odds were infinitely in favour of the foe. Operations performed on kitchen tables by the light of spluttering candles; amputations in open fields amidst crowds of sympathetic but helpless labourers or lumberjacks or husbandmen were common incidents in his life. All this gigantic heroism was performed without thought of



recompense, or of pecuniary reward. If any one paid the doctor—it was well. If not, no matter; the next call for help met with the same swift response, the same eager service.

So for twelve years Dr. Tupper laboured. His fame as a man spread throughout the Cumberland district, and his skill as a physician received more than local acknowledgment. Many offers of lucrative employment in Halifax and Saint John he rejected; his job was in the settlements and the back blocks of Cumberland—and there he remained. It is not difficult to imagine how popular he was in his own country.

When thirty years old, Tupper first flirted with politics by supporting the candidature of a Conservative against that redoubtable Nova Scotian statesman, Joseph Howe. This he did with such obvious ability that, three or four years later, he was invited to accept nomination himself, and oppose Mr. Howe at the election of 1855. It was that election that altered Tupper's career, and gave to Canada a great statesman.

Howe had the reputation of being an orator, and had all the prestige of being the leader of a great Liberal Party. Tupper was no orator; he was just an honest man, dogged, fearless, and gifted with a great "bell like" voice. The result of that election was a sweeping victory for the Liberals, with the single exception that, in Cumberland, Howe went down to defeat before Tupper. The young doctor swept the experienced politician aside, and made a triumphal entry into the Nova Scotian Parliament. There he swiftly came into prominence. At forty-two, Tupper had become



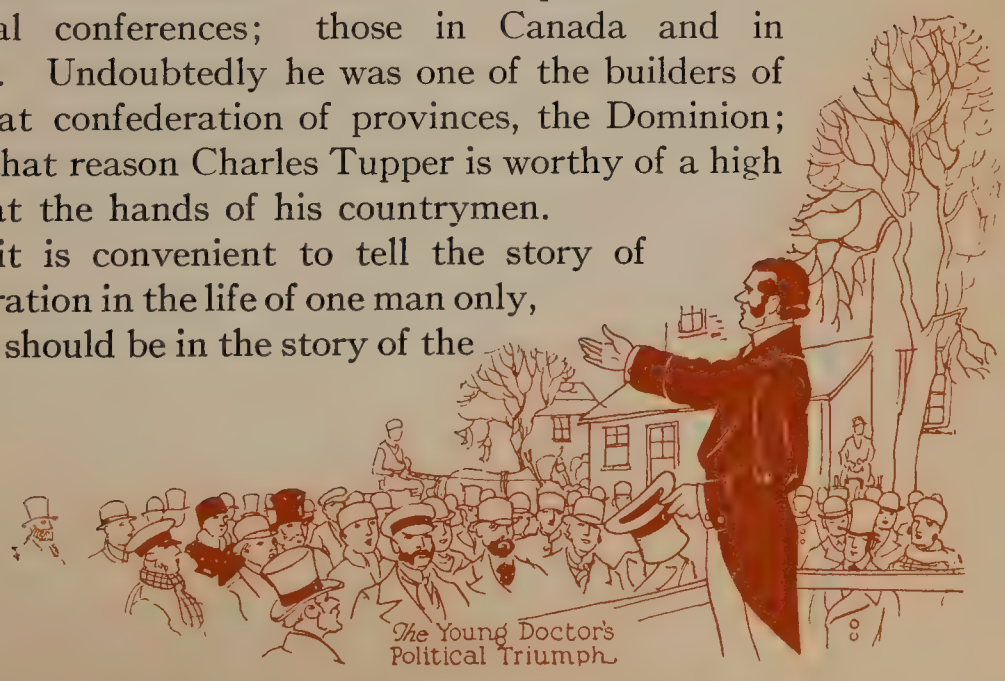
Premier of Nova Scotia, with a reputation which extended beyond the boundaries of that province.

At this time, 1864, Tupper attended a conference held at Charlottetown at which delegates from the three Maritime Provinces—Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick—discussed the legislative union of the Maritimes. It is history how the two Canadas, Upper and Lower, also attended this conference, and that at that meeting the germ of Confederation first showed signs of life.

So far as Nova Scotia is concerned, credit of the first mention of Confederation must be given the Liberal Prime Minister, Joseph Howe—Tupper's old opponent and rival—who passed a resolution in favour of union as early as 1861. Tupper, as leader of the opposition, seconded that resolution, which passed without dissent. Howe, in common with many leaders in other provinces, treated Confederation as an academic subject, a dream; when Tupper came into power he attempted to reduce it to practical politics. And his assurance, his courage, diplomacy, driving power and pertinacity, greatly assisted its eventual establishment.

Throughout the evolution of this movement, the Amherst Doctor attended all the important inter-provincial conferences; those in Canada and in England. Undoubtedly he was one of the builders of that great confederation of provinces, the Dominion; and for that reason Charles Tupper is worthy of a high honour at the hands of his countrymen.

But it is convenient to tell the story of Confederation in the life of one man only, and that should be in the story of the



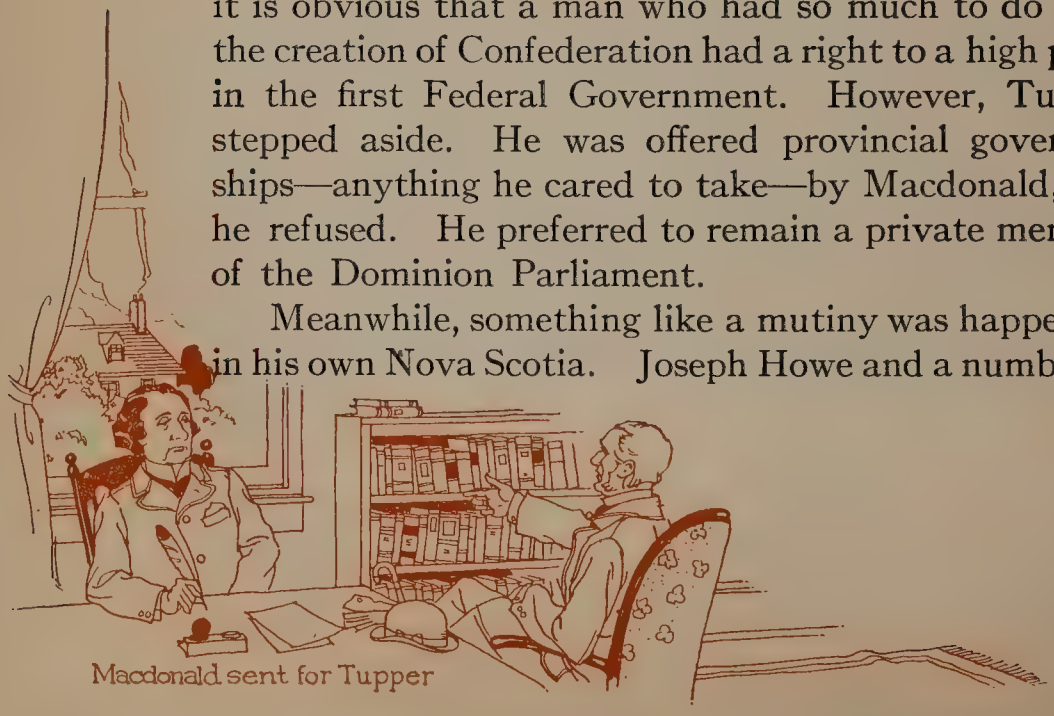
The Young Doctor's Political Triumph

great leader, Macdonald. Tupper accomplished other things—things no other Canadian attempted—and those accomplishments may well be woven into the story of his life.

Tupper's influence in the establishment of Confederation, history should, and does, acknowledge. Throughout the proceedings Tupper displayed tremendous qualities of statesmanship; but "the fighting doctor" was even more spectacular when he played a lone hand—a lone hand for Canada.

When Macdonald formed his government, Tupper was naturally invited to join that government, and as naturally the doctor accepted. But fate, or the inevitable chicanery of party politics, decided otherwise. In order to save his chief from a position of embarrassment, if not of absolute stalemate, Tupper stepped aside. So many men had claims for office, there was such insistence for a proportionate distribution of portfolios among representatives of different provinces, that poor Macdonald was almost prevented from constructing his first Federal Cabinet. Tupper saved the situation by stepping aside, and abandoning his claim to office. It was a generous gesture, since it is obvious that a man who had so much to do with the creation of Confederation had a right to a high place in the first Federal Government. However, Tupper stepped aside. He was offered provincial governorships—anything he cared to take—by Macdonald, but he refused. He preferred to remain a private member of the Dominion Parliament.

Meanwhile, something like a mutiny was happening in his own Nova Scotia. Joseph Howe and a number of



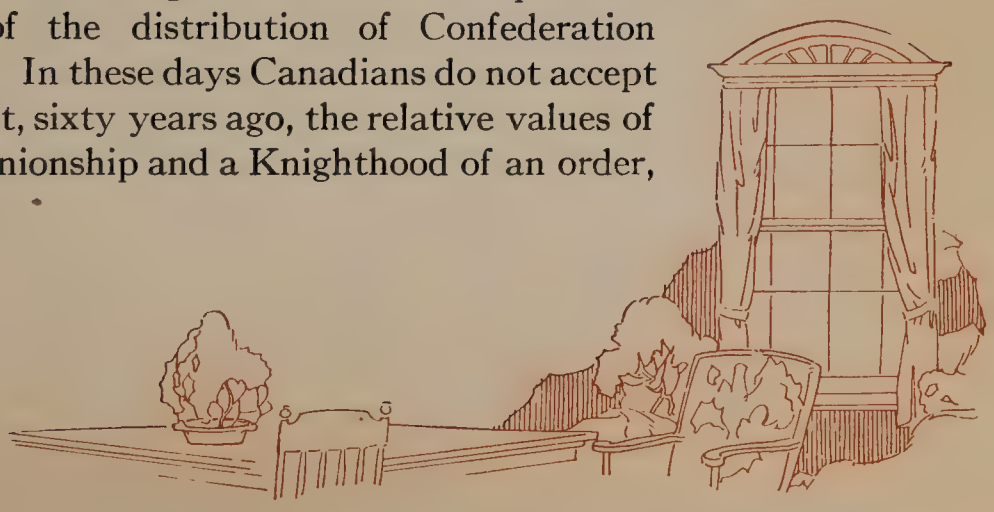
Macdonald sent for Tupper

his friends were storming against Confederation. In '68 Howe, accompanied by a number of other delegates, went to England carrying with them enormous petitions begging the Imperial Government to release them from the Union. They asked for the appointment of a Royal Commission. And though they eventually failed utterly in all their efforts, at first they gained considerable sympathy both in the English press and Parliament. It must be remembered that in those far off days Imperial Parliament had a certain authority in regard to the government of her "colonies", which has now ceased to exist.

Macdonald recognized the seriousness of this Nova Scotian revolt, so he sent for Tupper. Tupper went to England, and, single-handed, he fought Howe and his party both in Parliament and throughout the press, and he won. Nova Scotia was not released from the Union, and a very few years afterwards, Nova Scotia proved that she was infinitely glad that she had not been permitted to break away.

Not only was the deputation routed, but its leader, Joseph Howe, was converted by Tupper. The astute Doctor not only turned the tables on Howe, but persuaded him to join Macdonald's cabinet, and thus become one of the pillars of Confederation.

During this visit to London Tupper achieved other diplomatic successes. He caused an adjustment to be made in regard to certain disparities in the matter of the distribution of Confederation honours. In these days Canadians do not accept titles; but, sixty years ago, the relative values of a Companionship and a Knighthood of an order,



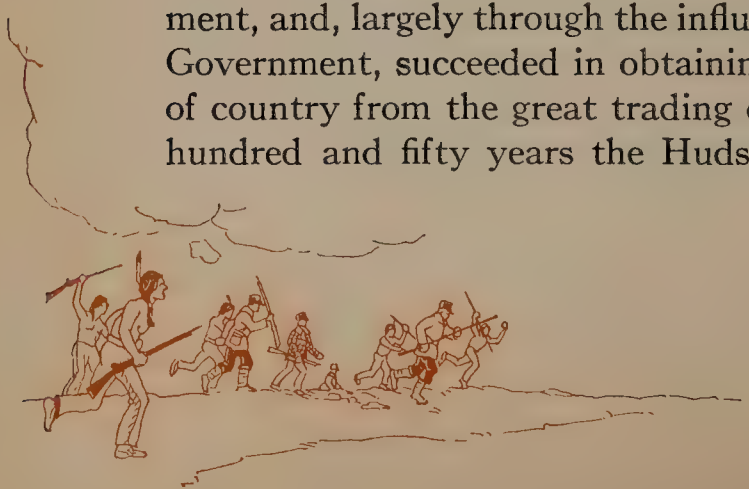
were matters of great concern among prominent men in the Dominion. Cartier felt deeply humiliated because he had only been created a C.B. (Companion of the Bath) while Macdonald had been knighted—given the K.C.B. (Knight Commander of the Bath). And there were other anomalies.

By remarkable persuasion, Tupper, through the Duke of Buckingham, the Colonial Secretary, got Cartier promoted to a baronetcy, and other promotions adjusted; though to-day these matters may seem of small account, in the "seventies" they were affairs of first importance.

All this time the Macdonald Government was not enjoying an existence of unruffled serenity. Men who had been their friends had abandoned them; some who had supported them without stint, now assailed them without mercy.

One of the chief causes for attack against the Government concerned certain disturbances reported from distant Manitoba.

The Dominion Government had by this time acquired, from the Hudson's Bay Company, the vast region then known as the North West Territories—all the country extending westward to the Rockies. The acquisition had been negotiated in London by Sir Georges Cartier, and the Hon. William Macdougall—both Fathers of Confederation. These two statesmen visited England at the request of the Dominion Government, and, largely through the influence of the Imperial Government, succeeded in obtaining this vast expanse of country from the great trading company. For two hundred and fifty years the Hudson's Bay Company

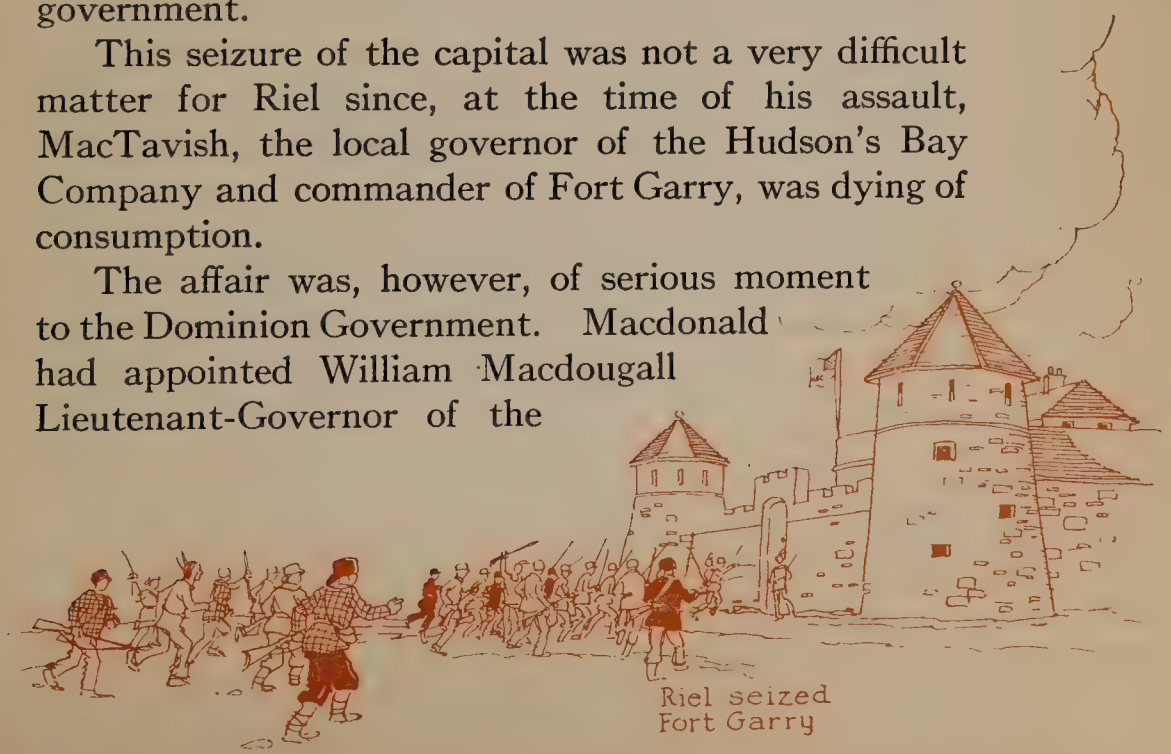


had exercised absolute control over this territory. Their factors and agents possessed almost sovereign rights, and made treaties and trading arrangements with all classes of the inhabitants. Naturally the natives—Indians and half-breeds and white traders—regarded the Company as all-powerful; as the Authority, and the only Authority. No doubt the Company treated the people well enough; certainly there was no evidence of any desire for change on the part of the inhabitants of the North West Territories.

Then the bombshell of annexation fell, and out West there was suspicion and grumbling among certain agents and traders and men of established position. When a man is doing well enough, he doesn't care to be forced to alter his method or conduct of life. Therefore it is reasonable to imagine there was a certain amount of foolish talk among the "old timers." The result was that those extremely excitable and highly strung people, the French half-breeds, became seriously affected. On the Red River they broke into open revolt; they seized the capital, Fort Garry, and, under the leadership of one Louis Riel, set up a provincial government.

This seizure of the capital was not a very difficult matter for Riel since, at the time of his assault, MacTavish, the local governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and commander of Fort Garry, was dying of consumption.

The affair was, however, of serious moment to the Dominion Government. Macdonald had appointed William Macdougall Lieutenant-Governor of the



Riel seized Fort Garry

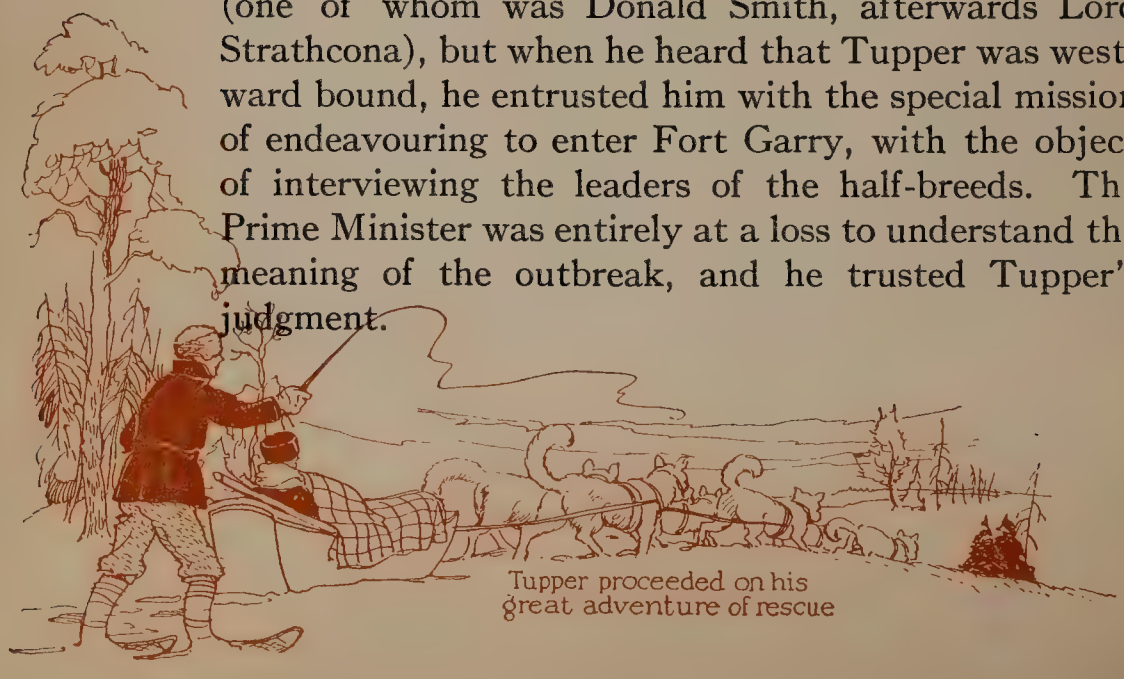
newly acquired territory, and that gentleman had proceeded on his journey to assume command of Fort Garry, and of the province. The new Governor was not accompanied by any fighting force, and he and his party, halted by Riel in the wilderness several days' journey from Fort Garry, were practically at the mercy of the half-breed.

Among Mr. Macdougall's party was Dr. Tupper's daughter, a young lady recently married to Captain Cameron, who was on the Governor's staff.

When the gallant doctor heard of his daughter's danger, he was tremendously affected, and immediately he determined to proceed personally to her assistance.

It was a curious trait in the character of this fighting doctor that never did he for a moment doubt that what he attempted, that would he do. He never thought of obtaining the assistance of troops or of police. All he cared for was that many hundreds of miles away, in the wilderness, his daughter was in danger at the hands of outlaw French half-breeds who had already relieved her of her baggage, and that it was his duty to protect her.

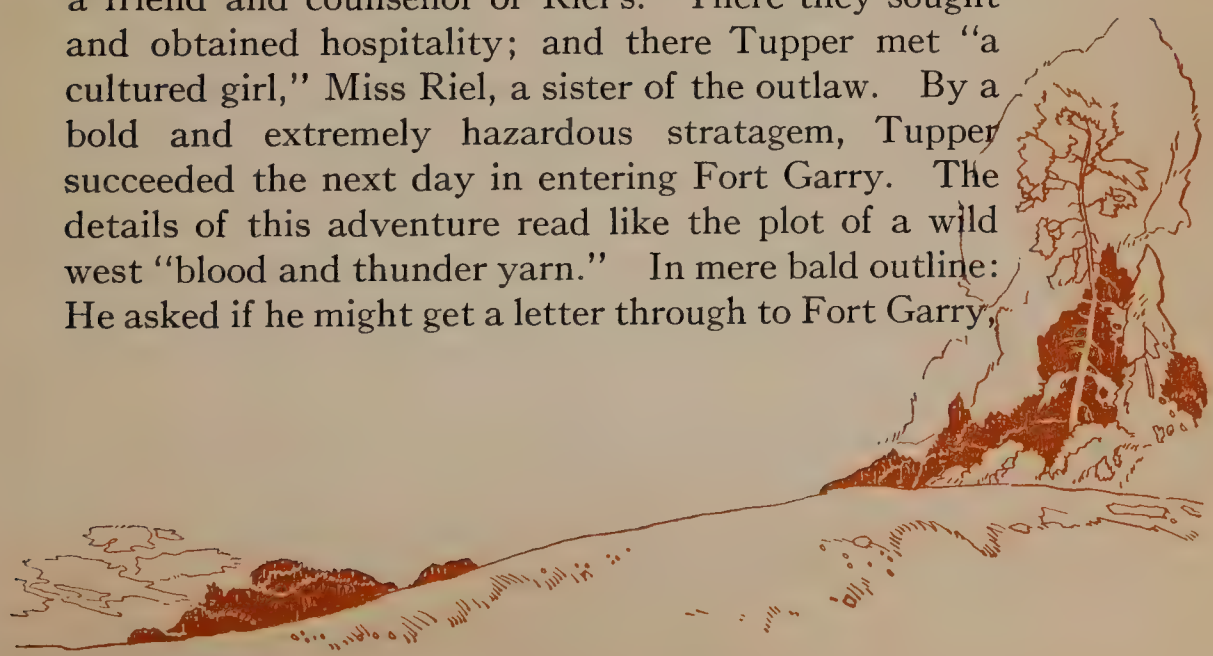
Macdonald had already placed the problem of the adjustment of the revolt in the hands of three men (one of whom was Donald Smith, afterwards Lord Strathcona), but when he heard that Tupper was westward bound, he entrusted him with the special mission of endeavouring to enter Fort Garry, with the object of interviewing the leaders of the half-breeds. The Prime Minister was entirely at a loss to understand the meaning of the outbreak, and he trusted Tupper's judgment.



Tupper proceeded on his great adventure of rescue

Tupper proceeded on this adventure of rescue. With Donald Smith, he left Ottawa in December with the thermometer thirty below zero, and after a most adventurous journey the two men reached Red River, and Pembina a few days later; there they found Captain Cameron with his wife, the Doctor's daughter. At Pembina Tupper parted company with Donald Smith, who did his best to dissuade the Doctor from attempting to enter Fort Garry. "It is at the cost of one's life to go to Fort Garry just now," said Smith. "Riel has seized all the arms and ammunition and whisky. A man was shot to death yesterday, and it's simply courting death to go there at present."

However, the impetuous doctor-statesman was not to be dissuaded or denied. He persuaded the future Lord Strathcona to lend him a dog-cariole (a large canvas shoe-like contrivance on a toboggan) and to this he hitched his horse and drove away. With him he took, as driver, a boy, "the son of a drunken old fellow who had married a full-blooded Sioux squaw." They drove through storm and snow and fog, a terrific, yet magnificent, journey; and at last reached the hut of a priest, Father Richot. This hut was only a few miles from Fort Garry, and the priest happened to be a friend and counsellor of Riel's. There they sought and obtained hospitality; and there Tupper met "a cultured girl," Miss Riel, a sister of the outlaw. By a bold and extremely hazardous stratagem, Tupper succeeded the next day in entering Fort Garry. The details of this adventure read like the plot of a wild west "blood and thunder yarn." In mere bald outline: He asked if he might get a letter through to Fort Garry,



and Miss Riel intimated that she was ready to forward at once any letter he cared to send.

A messenger appeared, and, the letter having been written, Tupper said, "I guess I had better go myself instead of sending a letter." The statement was made in such an ordinary manner that the messenger had no suspicion. Tupper jumped into the rig, the messenger whipped up the horse, and away they went to Fort Garry.

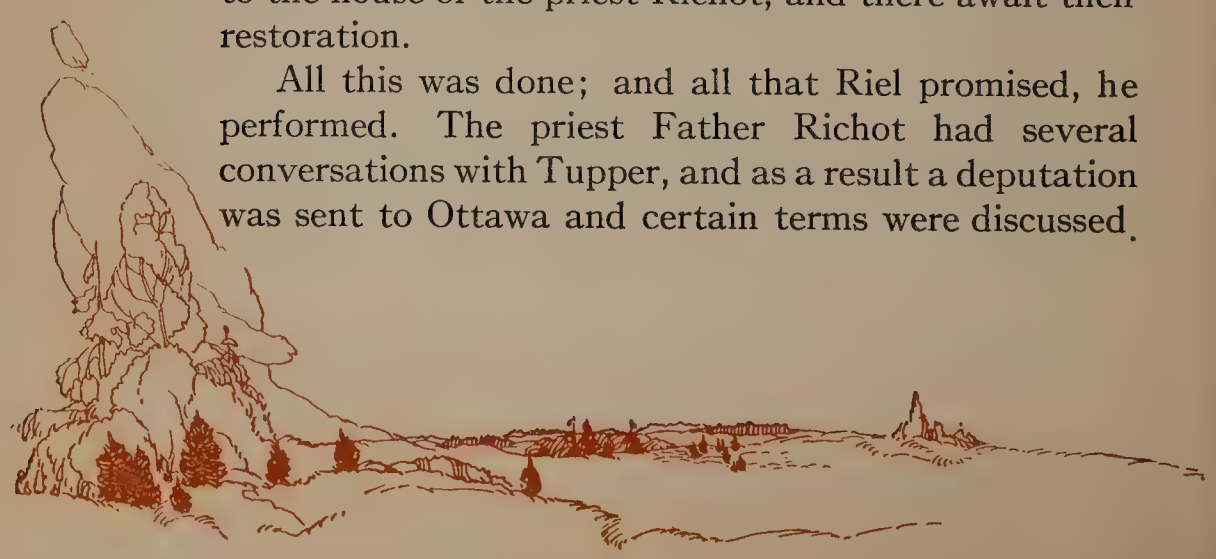
Arrived at the gate the messenger struck the postern three times with his whip, shouting the password, and the city was open to the messenger, the rig and Dr. Tupper. He reached Riel and confronted the outlaw chief.

After all his high adventure and heroic conduct, the manner in which he introduced himself to the rebel leader seems so commonplace as to be incongruous:

"I am Doctor Tupper, an independent member of the House of Commons. I came out here to take my daughter home. Her husband's horses and carriage and their personal effects have been taken from them. I came here to ask you to return their property."

Riel received the Doctor with the utmost courtesy and consideration. He promised that his daughter's horses and effects should be returned intact the next day, and recommended that the Doctor should return to the house of the priest Richot, and there await their restoration.

All this was done; and all that Riel promised, he performed. The priest Father Richot had several conversations with Tupper, and as a result a deputation was sent to Ottawa and certain terms were discussed.



It is to be regretted that those discussions eventuated in no permanent adjustment; but the political result does not detract from the daring of Tupper, in facing death in many forms, for the sake of what he took to be his simple duty.

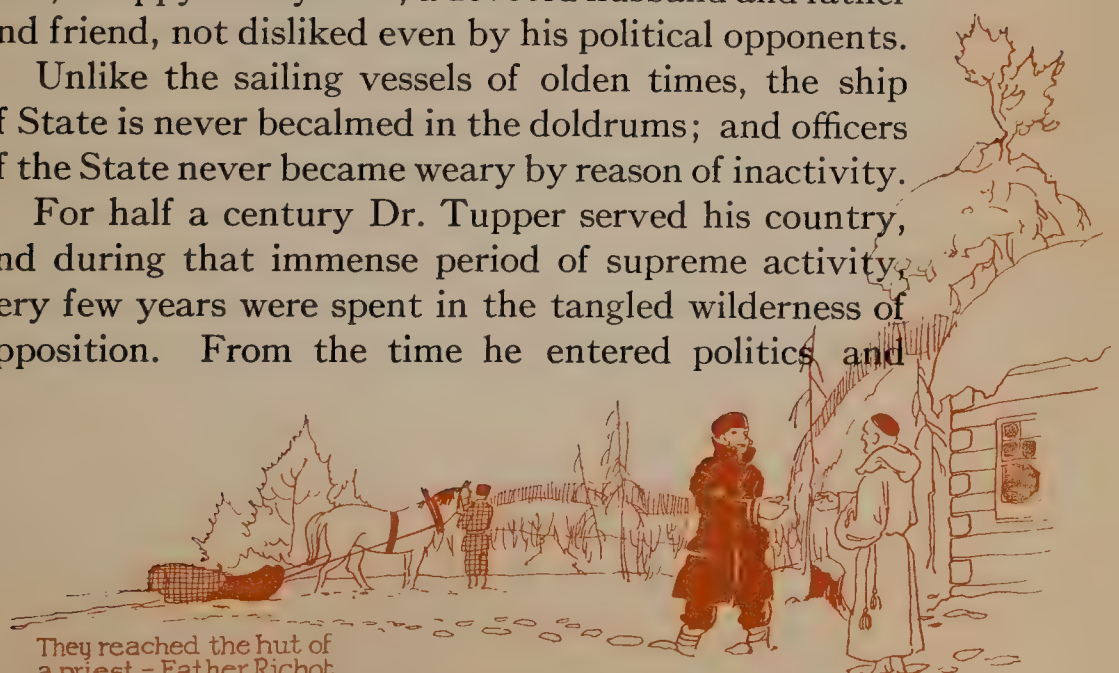
Shortly after his return to Ottawa he joined the Government as President of the Council, taking the place of Howe, who had been nominated Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. He held other portfolios, among them the Ministry of Customs, and eventually that of Railways.

For a time Tupper carried on most useful work as a Minister of the Dominion. His great gifts of courage and pertinacity, and his capacity for hard work, were of enormous value to his chief, Macdonald, to the Government and to Canada. His remarkable courage amounted to genius; nothing daunted him, no problem was too difficult for him to tackle, and as a rule, to overcome. He earned for himself such picturesque nicknames as "Nova Scotia's Napoleon," and the "war-horse of Cumberland." As a young man entering politics he had been called "the fighting Doctor."

But for all his fighting propensities he was a genial man, a happy family man; a devoted husband and father and friend, not disliked even by his political opponents.

Unlike the sailing vessels of olden times, the ship of State is never becalmed in the doldrums; and officers of the State never became weary by reason of inactivity.

For half a century Dr. Tupper served his country, and during that immense period of supreme activity, very few years were spent in the tangled wilderness of opposition. From the time he entered politics and

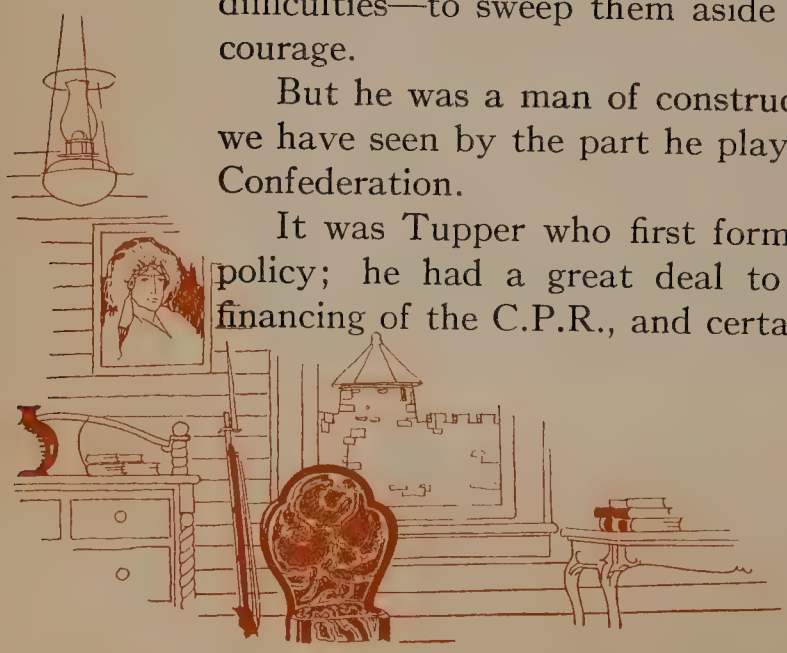


They reached the hut of a priest - Father Richot

Parliament, to the years of his retirement at a splendid old age, he returned to the practice of his profession as a physician for only a very brief period. When Macdonald, defeated and dejected, came from Ottawa to Toronto, and, instead of creating laws, interpreted them as a professional lawyer, Tupper, the sympathetic friend and unfailing lieutenant, followed his leader; he hung out his shingle as a family physician in the same city. He was just as efficient at the bedside of a sick woman, as he was at his desk at Ottawa, in the council hall of Westminster, the grotesque reception room of the rebel Riel, or the audience chamber at Windsor.

A versatile man, this Nova Scotian Napoleon, but too much of the war-horse of Cumberland long to remain a doctor who was not a fighting doctor.

Macdonald regained office and power, and Tupper joined forces with him in his struggle to create for Canada a condition of greatness and solidarity. Probably Tupper served his country best by exercising for her benefit the full force of his indomitable courage. He inspired men, of perhaps greater vision and understanding, with strength; when his wonderful leader threatened to sink in the face of difficulties seemingly invincible, Tupper stood at hand to destroy those difficulties—to sweep them aside by sheer strength of courage.



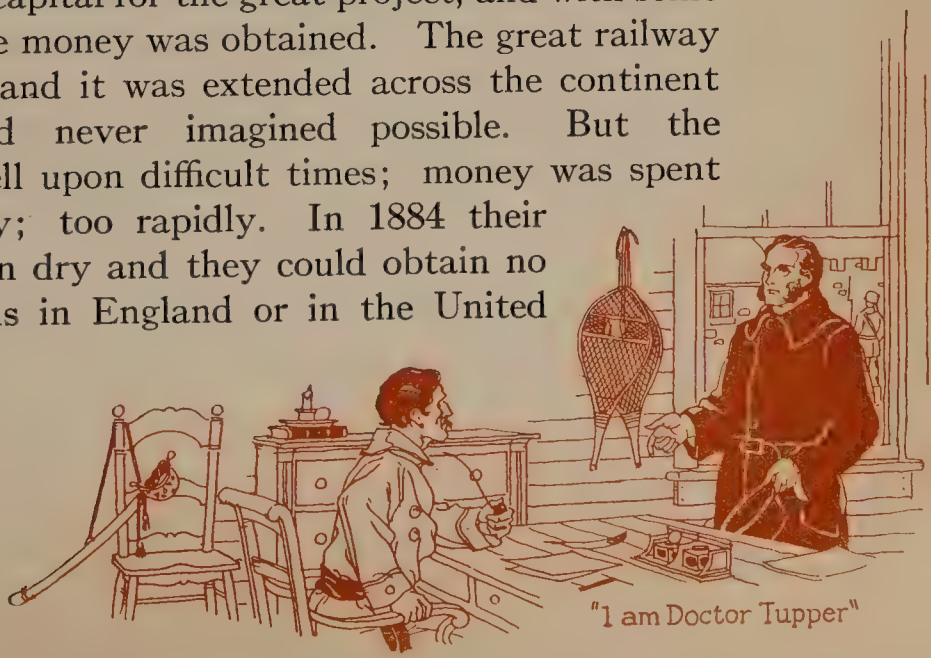
But he was a man of constructive ability also—as we have seen by the part he played in the creation of Confederation.

It was Tupper who first formulated the National policy; he had a great deal to do with the initial financing of the C.P.R., and certainly he was the man

who saved that railway from threatened disaster which, had it not been diverted, would have retarded the completion of the line for a decade. Also, much of his diplomatic work was of a constructive character, as is shown in the Fisheries Settlement with the U.S. in 1888.

In process of negotiating the terms of the Fisheries Settlement, he sat, as Canada's representative, with Joseph Chamberlain representing Britain, and Bayard the United States. Progress in the settlement of this ancient international difficulty was slow; so slow that Chamberlain and Tupper were seeking a decent way of breaking off negotiations without causing international friction, when "an idea" suddenly occurred to the Nova Scotian diplomat. Conversations were renewed to greater advantage, and Tupper's sudden "idea" was the germ from which the Settlement evolved.

But probably the Doctor's greatest constructive work was in connection with the building of the C.P.R. Of course, he had nothing whatever to do with the actual work of construction. The idea of the railway was no dream of his, and in the actual work of building he played no part. But he had much to do with transforming the dream into a tangible and workable scheme. With Macdonald and J. H. Pope he went to England to raise the capital for the great project, and with some difficulty the money was obtained. The great railway was begun, and it was extended across the continent at a speed never imagined possible. But the Company fell upon difficult times; money was spent very rapidly; too rapidly. In 1884 their resources ran dry and they could obtain no further loans in England or in the United



"I am Doctor Tupper"

States. The position was critical. Tupper at that time was acting as High Commissioner in London. The Minister of Railways cabled him, urging him to "come at once." Tupper caught the next boat, and in Ottawa, in the face of great opposition, succeeded in persuading Parliament to advance $30,000,000 to the Company for four years at 4%. He made the stipulation, however, that in return the Company must complete the road five years sooner than the original contract stipulated.

The situation was saved; the building proceeded; the road was completed within the amended term of years, and the loan in due course was repaid.

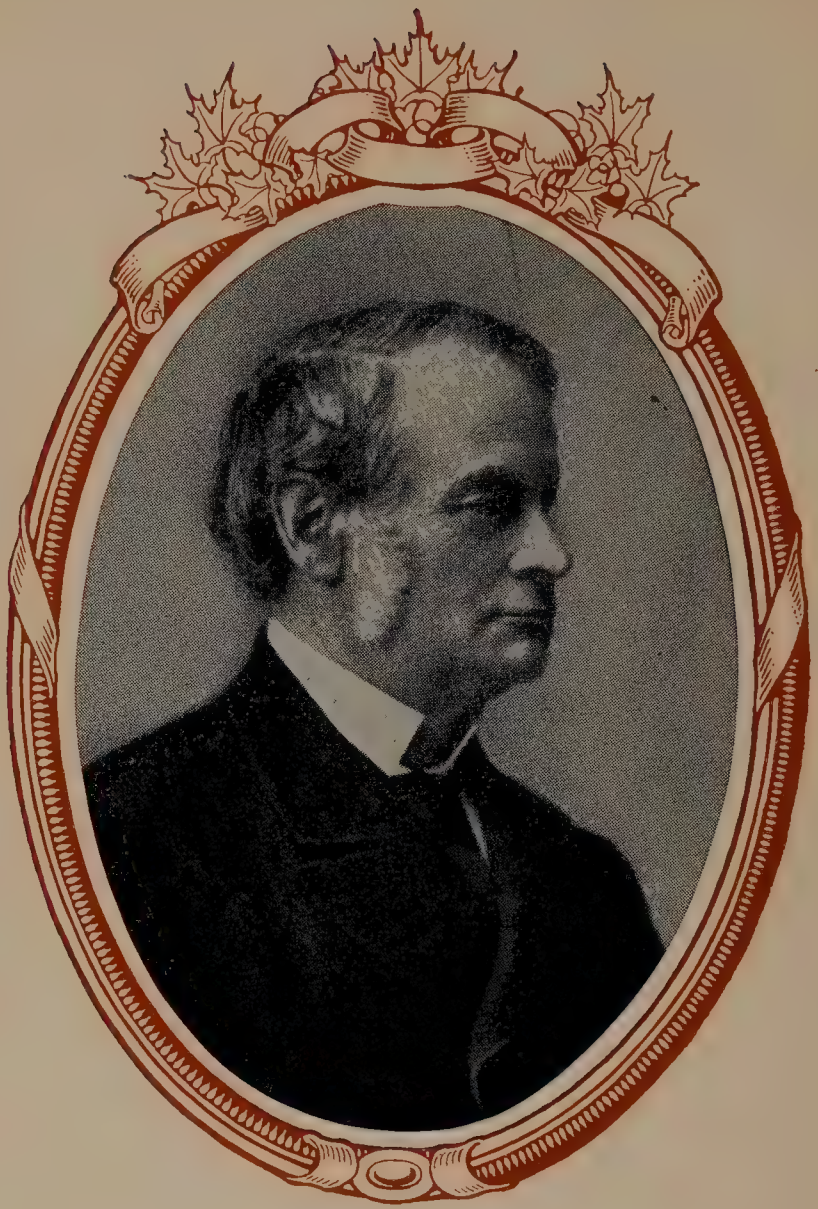
The later years of Tupper's political life were spent as High Commissioner in London. A delicate office, which he filled with great distinction.

At the age of seventy-five, when most men have retired from all the activities of life, this extraordinary man received an urgent call for help from his party at Ottawa. The premiership, and leadership, were thrust upon him. The old war-horse of Cumberland charged into the battle again. He became the supreme leader of his party; in power and in opposition he fought on, indomitable and magnificent. Surely this was a man!

In October, 1915, he died, in England, Sir Charles Tupper, Baronet. The high honour of a baronetcy had been conferred upon him by Queen Victoria in 1888. The work that he did in Canada will endure for ever, and his name is an honoured part of our history.

They brought his body from England back to his native land on the deck of a battleship, cleared for action. For in 1915 the Nations were already at war.

Sir Leonard Tilley



Sir Leonard Tilley

1818 - 1896

Sir Leonard Tilley

LEONARD TILLEY was a man of the fine, steady, old fashioned sort we read about in school prize books. He was of the type that is born without vice. From boyhood he diligently performed his daily task, and, by intelligence and honesty, at an early age he had converted his inheritance into a comfortable fortune. His adult life he gave unselfishly to the cause of his fellow man, asking no return. In the service of his country he gained great distinction, and was justly honoured. He was a Great Canadian. It was he who brought into being that first conference at Charlottetown at which the union of the Maritimes was discussed; the meetings upon which Macdonald and his group of Canadians descended, bringing with them the message of Confederation.

After the meeting at Charlottetown, and the later conference at Quebec, Tilley found, by means of a general election, that his ideas of federation were not shared by a majority of the people of New Brunswick. He suffered defeat at the polls, and his party was swept out of office—almost out of existence. The majority against him seemed overwhelming; there seemed no hope for his cause in his own province. Yet, fifteen months later, he converted New Brunswick to his own ideas, and transformed disastrous defeat into magnificent victory. He led his people to Confederation.



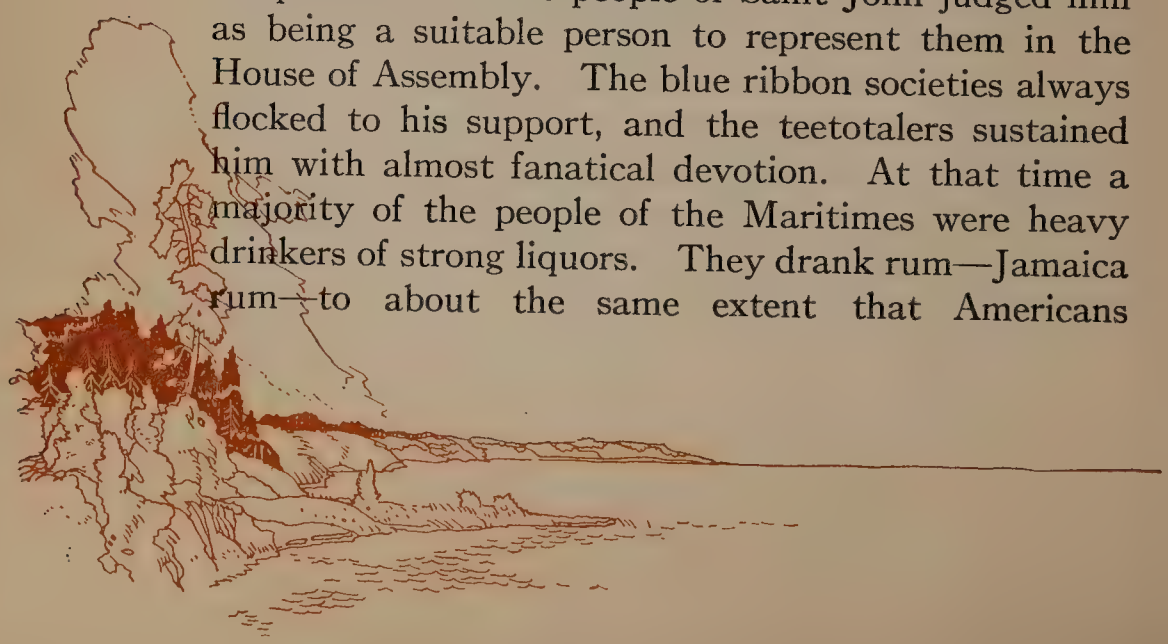
At a very early age Tilley became a clerk

Samuel Leonard Tilley was born at Gagetown on the Saint John River in 1818. His father and his mother were of Loyalist stock, and the family had for at least two generations been in comfortable circumstances. Thomas Tilley, Leonard's father, apprenticed as a boy to a builder, carried on a lucrative trade as a lumberman, and eventually opened a store in Gagetown where he conducted a successful business. Leonard's mother was connected with some of the wealthiest farmers in Nova Scotia. On both sides, his forebears were of the class that provided the province with magistrates and members of Assembly.

Leonard attended the local grammar school until, at the astonishingly early age of thirteen, he entered a drug store as a clerk. When he was nineteen he started trade on his own account, and fifteen years later he was able to retire from business, a wealthy man.

Throughout his youth he was a regular attendant at the local debating society, and, in his own eminently practical manner, he made a study of public speaking. Before he was twenty he had identified himself with the cause of total abstinence, and throughout his life he was a strong temperance advocate.

Probably it was because of his strong advocacy of temperance that the people of Saint John judged him as being a suitable person to represent them in the House of Assembly. The blue ribbon societies always flocked to his support, and the teetotalers sustained him with almost fanatical devotion. At that time a majority of the people of the Maritimes were heavy drinkers of strong liquors. They drank rum—Jamaica rum—to about the same extent that Americans

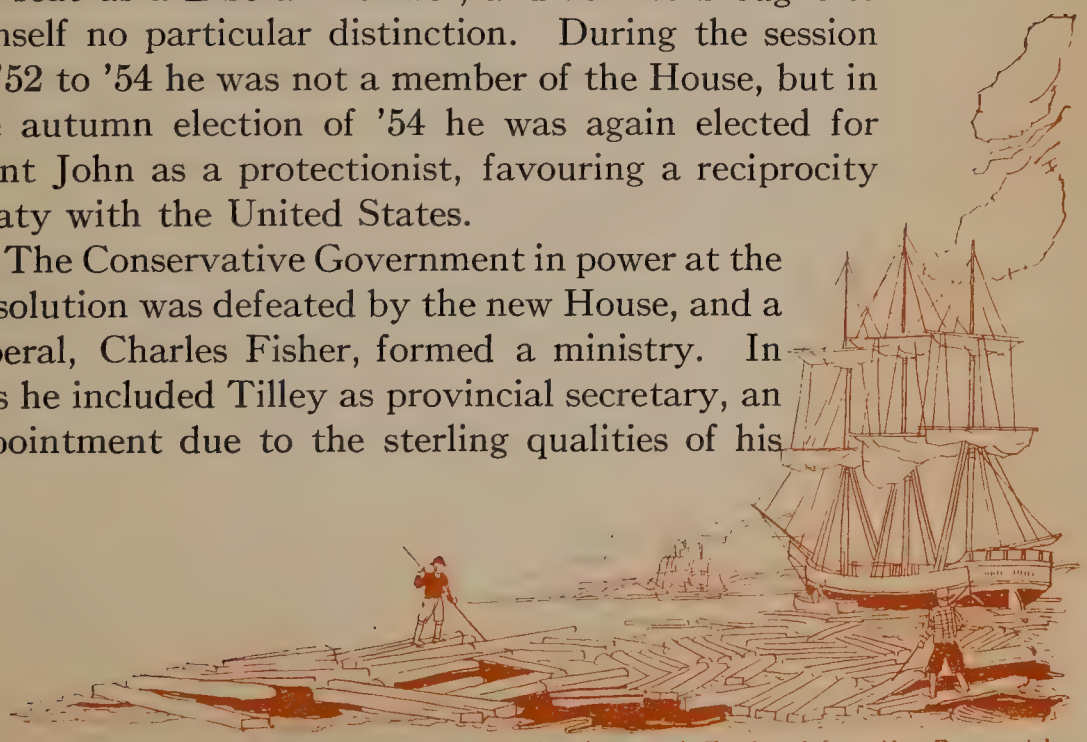


nowadays drink ice water. History does not tell us whether the sobriquet "Blue nose," as applied to the men of the Maritimes, has any direct association with this old time drinking habit. But the fact of the enormous capacity of the old time man of the Maritimes as a strong drinker of strong drinks is undeniable. So that in his advocacy of total abstinence, Tilley found a large following among those who were appalled by the alcoholic excesses of the period.

The adoption by England of Free Trade developed the "annexation" movement throughout the Maritimes. New Brunswick, in common with all the colonies, had long enjoyed a preference on her timber in the British markets. Free trade would abolish this preference, and the Maritimes feared foreign competition. Petitions and remonstrances to England proved unavailing, and there was great discontent in New Brunswick.

It was as a candidate pledged to protection that Tilley was, in 1850, first elected as member for the City of Saint John in the House of Assembly. He took his seat as a Liberal member, and at first brought to himself no particular distinction. During the session of '52 to '54 he was not a member of the House, but in the autumn election of '54 he was again elected for Saint John as a protectionist, favouring a reciprocity treaty with the United States.

The Conservative Government in power at the dissolution was defeated by the new House, and a Liberal, Charles Fisher, formed a ministry. In this he included Tilley as provincial secretary, an appointment due to the sterling qualities of his



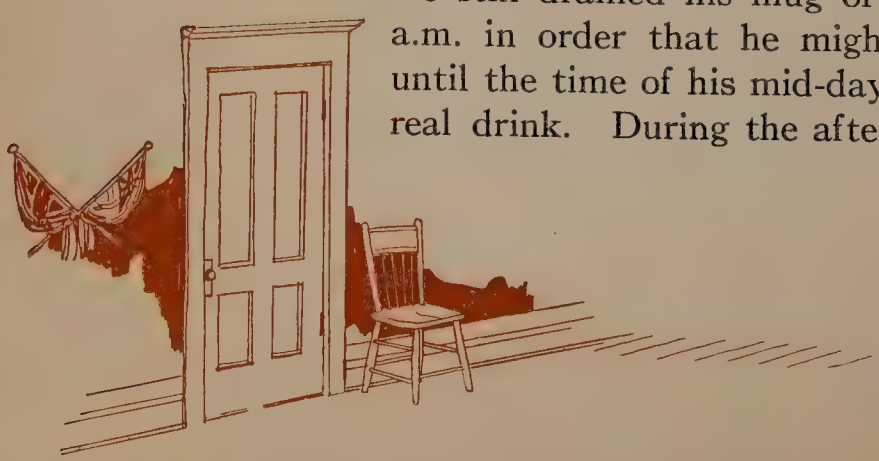
Shipping timber to England from New Brunswick

character, rather than to any displayed symptoms of parliamentary brilliance.

In the following year, '55, Tilley jumped into provincial prominence by bringing in a bill to prevent the importation, manufacture, or sale of liquor: "The Prohibitory Liquor Act." This he introduced as a private member, and not as a member of the Government; though necessarily, since Tilley was a member of the cabinet, the Government was definitely associated with the measure.

By a very small majority—three, to be exact—the bill passed its third reading. It is probable that a great many members of the House voted in favour of the measure for the sake of obtaining moral or political kudos, but with the conviction that it would be thrown out by the legislative council. To their disgust, the measure was passed by the upper house, and, in consequence, on the first day of '56 prohibition automatically became operative.

The disgust of these political humbugs was as nothing compared to the amazed fury of the citizens of Saint John, and the Province of New Brunswick. Probably a large proportion of the jolly topers had never heard of the measure; certainly they would not understand the meaning of the word prohibition, as applied to rum. For the most part the law was ignored. The lumberman still had his draught of strong liquor as he rose sleepily from his rugs at dawn He still drained his mug of rum at eleven a.m. in order that he might be sustained until the time of his mid-day meal, and the real drink. During the afternoon he would

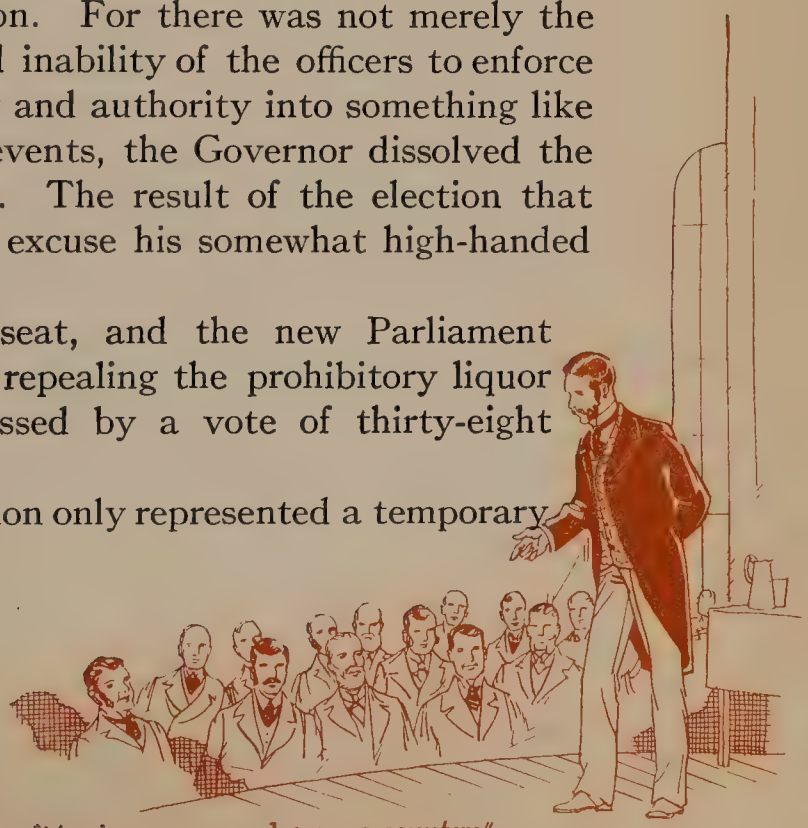


continue to while away the tedious hours of labour to the accompaniment of many a sip, and, in the evening, he still spent most of the time in gay carouse. The duty on rum was only thirty cents a gallon, so poor men could buy it by the quart. The prohibition act gave zest to drinking. There were some two hundred taverns in the city and suburbs of Saint John, and theoretically every one of these had to close its doors. Actually, they all remained wide open; and did an increased business.

The new law also annoyed those people in responsible positions who disliked total abstinence. It so annoyed the Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable H. J. Manners-Sutton, that, against the advice of his council, he dissolved the House of Assembly. Manners-Sutton liked his bottle; he was a man to whom total abstinence was a mere abhorrence. Apart from this personal abhorrence, the attempts made by the officers of the Government to enforce the law caused so much confusion and tumult, that the Governor was probably justified in his action. For there was not merely the confusion; the total inability of the officers to enforce the act brought law and authority into something like contempt. At all events, the Governor dissolved the House of Assembly. The result of the election that followed seemed to excuse his somewhat high-handed procedure.

Tilley lost his seat, and the new Parliament introduced an act, repealing the prohibitory liquor law, which was passed by a vote of thirty-eight to two.

This liquor election only represented a temporary



"My dear son, you have no country"

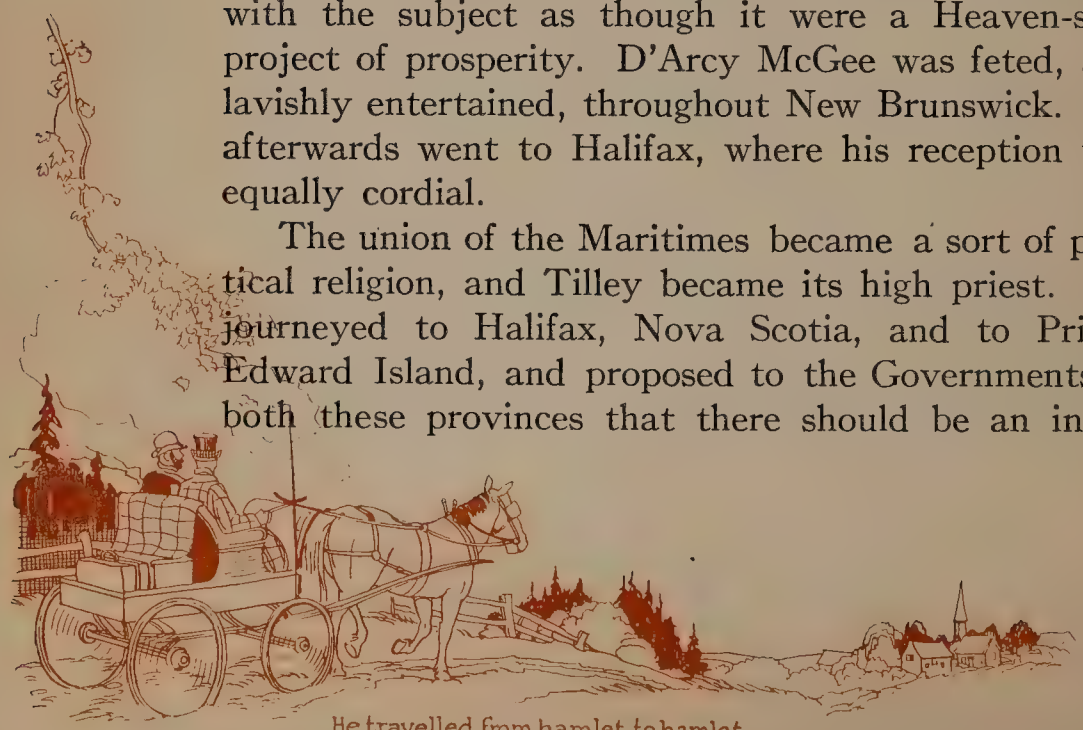
setback for the Liberal Party and Tilley. The new Government was forced to resign in '57; Tilley was elected once more, and Fisher resumed the premiership.

From this time onward to '63-'64, Tilley did useful departmental work in the House of Assembly; he was strongly identified with the policy of railway construction. He made one or two journeys to England, and presented the New Brunswick position to the authorities in a very able manner.

But it was not until '63-'64 that he commenced the work which justifies his inclusion in the group of great men who laid the foundation of our Dominion.

Joseph Howe, in Nova Scotia, had long been advocating the union of the Maritime Provinces; this policy was regarded by the statesmen of New Brunswick as a sort of far-off dream: a policy which might be examined, perhaps adopted—some day. Then, in '63, D'Arcy McGee, a forceful and eloquent speaker, came to Saint John to lecture at the Mechanics Institute on the union of colonies. This speech seemed to awaken New Brunswick to the vast possibilities of unity. The local press adopted the idea, and their scribes dealt with the subject as though it were a Heaven-sent project of prosperity. D'Arcy McGee was feted, and lavishly entertained, throughout New Brunswick. He afterwards went to Halifax, where his reception was equally cordial.

The union of the Maritimes became a sort of political religion, and Tilley became its high priest. He journeyed to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and to Prince Edward Island, and proposed to the Governments of both these provinces that there should be an inter-



He travelled from hamlet to hamlet

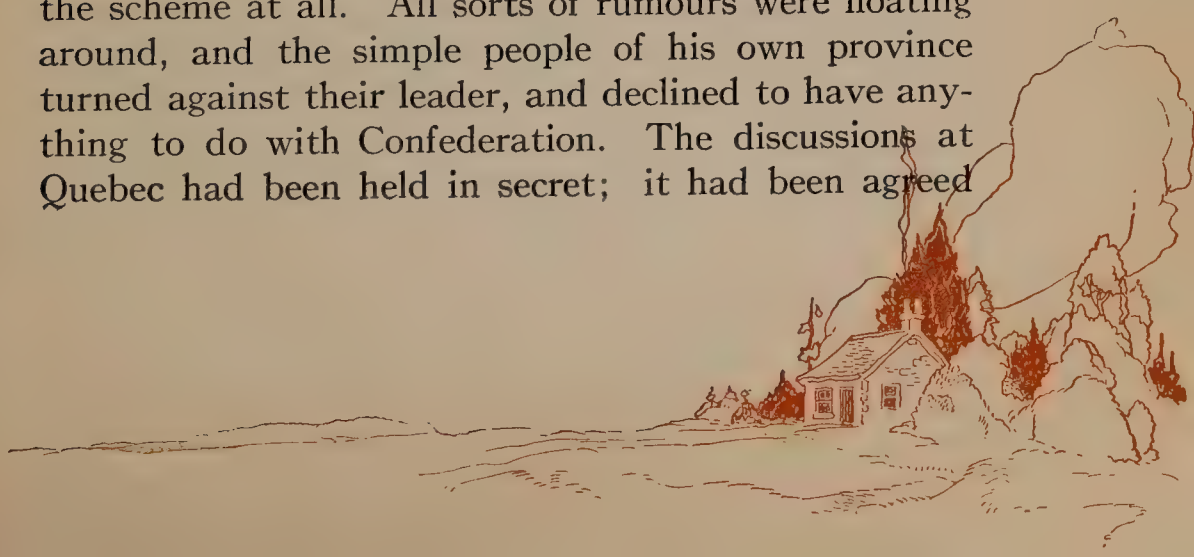
provincial tariff arrangement. He suggested free admission of natural products, and a uniform tariff on all dutiable goods. Everyone agreed—at the time. But later, Howe wrote Tilley that a reduction of tariff, so far as Nova Scotia was concerned, was not practical; and that the scheme, "though desirable," would have to be postponed.

Tilley did not allow the matter to drop. Largely as a result of his activities, the Parliaments of the three Maritime Provinces authorized their Governments to negotiate in the direction of the union. It was arranged that a convention should be held at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in the September of '64.

The record of that momentous gathering is a large chapter in the history of the Dominion. How John A. Macdonald and his Canadians came down from Quebec and proposed the confederation of all the British American provinces, is a story as great as the tale of Wolfe and Montcalm at Frontenac.

Tilley played an important part in these conferences. He spoke for New Brunswick; he and Tupper were the principal representatives of the Maritimes. At Quebec he was one of those who subscribed to the framework of the agreement which eventually became known as the Quebec Scheme; and then went back to tell his own people at Saint John all about it.

To his astonishment, New Brunswick did not like the scheme at all. All sorts of rumours were floating around, and the simple people of his own province turned against their leader, and declined to have anything to do with Confederation. The discussions at Quebec had been held in secret; it had been agreed



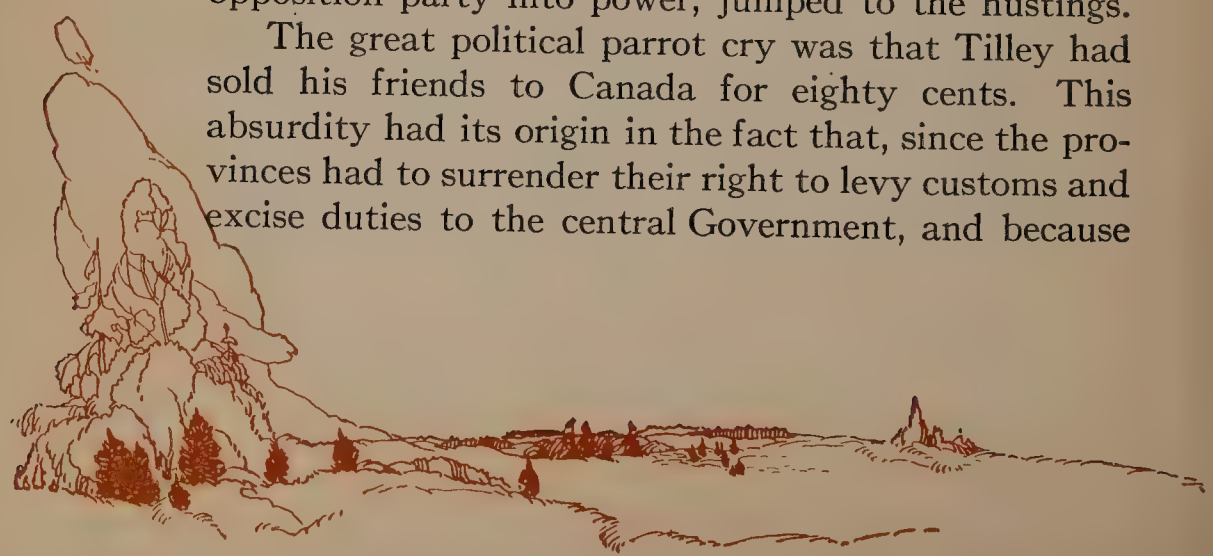
that the terms should not be made public until the delegates had had an opportunity of presenting the details to their various Governments. Naturally, various distorted facts leaked through the locked doors of the conference hall. These served to prejudice many people against the scheme, even before it was completely constructed.

New Brunswick was certainly adversely prejudiced, as Tilley found to his unbounded amazement. If he had amazed New Brunswick over his prohibition scheme, New Brunswick returned the compliment in the matter of the confederation scheme. It was decided that the project should be placed before the public, and the opinion of the people ascertained by means of a general election.

Immediately there sprang into existence an extraordinary army of politicians who allied themselves against Tilley and his friends, and fought them with extraordinary skill.

Men who had long retired from politics—ex-ministers, ex-officials, ex-everything that had ever been powerful in the province—emerged from obscurity and rallied to the ranks of the anti-confederates. Political adventurers, scenting possibilities of the profits of office, came into the battle; and ambitious youngsters, whose only chance of quick promotion lay in hoisting the opposition party into power, jumped to the hustings.

The great political parrot cry was that Tilley had sold his friends to Canada for eighty cents. This absurdity had its origin in the fact that, since the provinces had to surrender their right to levy customs and excise duties to the central Government, and because



this sum had in some way to be made up to the provinces, each province should receive from the central Government a sum equal to eighty cents per head of its population.

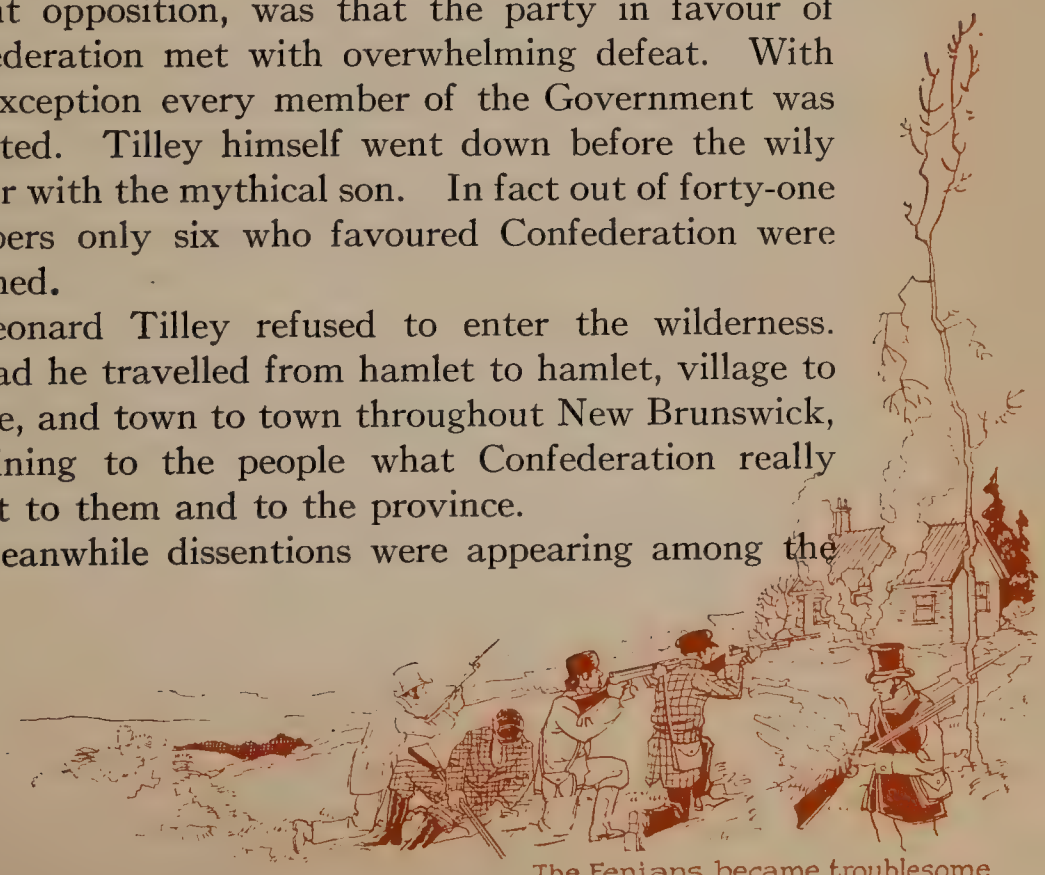
A brilliant lawyer, who opposed Tilley in his own constituency of Saint John, adopted a very clever method of appealing to his meetings. On the platform he conducted a dialogue with an imaginary son. "Father," this mythical youngster would ask, "what country do we live in?" The answer came in plaintive tones, "My dear son, you have no country, for Mr. Tilley has sold us to the Canadians for eighty cents a head."

The country people were told that they would be swamped by taxation. Everything they possessed—their ploughs and horses, cows and sheep and chickens—would be taxed to a terrible extent, if this scheme of Confederation came into existence.

The consequence of such clever electioneering, such violent opposition, was that the party in favour of Confederation met with overwhelming defeat. With one exception every member of the Government was unseated. Tilley himself went down before the wily lawyer with the mythical son. In fact out of forty-one members only six who favoured Confederation were returned.

Leonard Tilley refused to enter the wilderness. Instead he travelled from hamlet to hamlet, village to village, and town to town throughout New Brunswick, explaining to the people what Confederation really meant to them and to the province.

Meanwhile dissentions were appearing among the



The Fenians became troublesome

members of the House, and a bye-election resulted in the victory of the Pro-Confederation candidate. The Lieutenant-Governor, Arthur Hamilton Gordon, who had been strongly against the Quebec Scheme, was called to Westminster, where it is supposed that the British officials talked to him severely, and ordered him to amend his tactics, and alter his political outlook.

When Mr. Gordon returned to Saint John he was a changed man; Confederation had become a very essential element in his policy.

At about this time the Fenians began to become very troublesome on the border of New Brunswick, and no doubt in the face of that menace, the province felt a little lonesome.

The internal dissentions, combined with the Fenian menace, and the altered attitude of the Governor, proved too much for the Anti-Confederation Government. It fell; and the Lieutenant-Governor called for another appeal to the public.

In the election that followed, the success of Tilley's missionary efforts became obvious. He and his party gained a sweeping victory.

In '65 six members of the New Brunswick Assembly were in favour of Confederation; in '66 of forty-one members returned, only eight were opposed to the Quebec Scheme. It was a magnificent victory for Tilley.



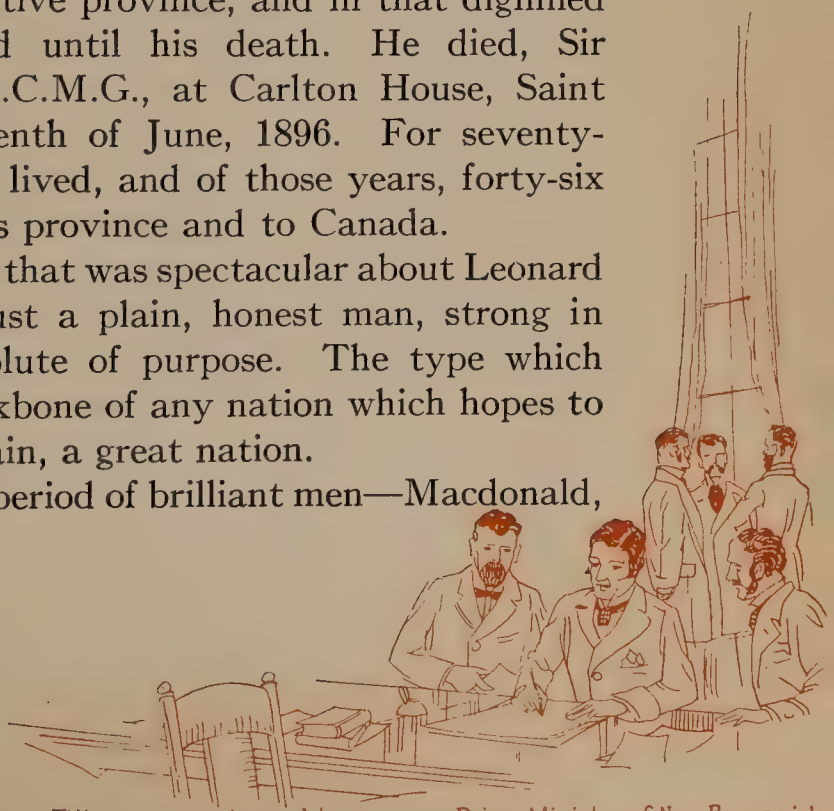
After an interval, when it became necessary to send delegates to England, Tilley was chosen as the leader of the delegation from New Brunswick. In London he was an active member of the conference, and had a proper share in the compilation of the epoch-making British North American Act.

In June, 1867, when Confederation came into being and Sir John A. Macdonald was entrusted by the Governor-General with the formation of the first ministry of the Dominion, Leonard Tilley entered the Cabinet, and became Minister of Customs. In '73 he became Minister of Finance. Just before John A. Macdonald resigned in November '73, Tilley had left the Government and had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. This office he held until Macdonald returned to power, when he rejoined his old chief, and again accepted office as Minister of Finance. In this capacity it fell to his lot to introduce the new tariff, the all important protectionist policy which had brought John A. Macdonald back to power. This onerous duty Tilley performed with great credit, displaying a mastery of figures and detail beyond the expectation of his most ardent admirers.

He remained in the Cabinet until '85 when his health began to fail; the Government then prevailed on him to accept once more the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of his native province, and in that dignified office he remained until his death. He died, Sir Leonard Tilley, K.C.M.G., at Carlton House, Saint John, on the eleventh of June, 1896. For seventy-eight years he had lived, and of those years, forty-six he had given to his province and to Canada.

There was little that was spectacular about Leonard Tilley. He was just a plain, honest man, strong in character and resolute of purpose. The type which must form the backbone of any nation which hopes to become, or to remain, a great nation.

He lived in the period of brilliant men—Macdonald,



Tilley was returned to power as Prime Minister of New Brunswick.

Howe, D'Arcy McGee—but the brilliance of these wizards of statecraft would have been worthless, useless, had there been no steady, strong, men of the Tilley type.

It has become the fashion to regard the respectable as essentially the unromantic; yet Cromwell, though no cavalier, was certainly a romantic person. And there have been others of a similar type; men who have lived splendidly, without seeking the spotlight in the centre of the stage.

Such a man was Tilley—Sir Leonard Tilley—who induced New Brunswick to enter the great Confederation of provinces which is now the Dominion. He was a good man, and a Great Canadian.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee



Thomas D'Arcy McGee

1825 - 1868

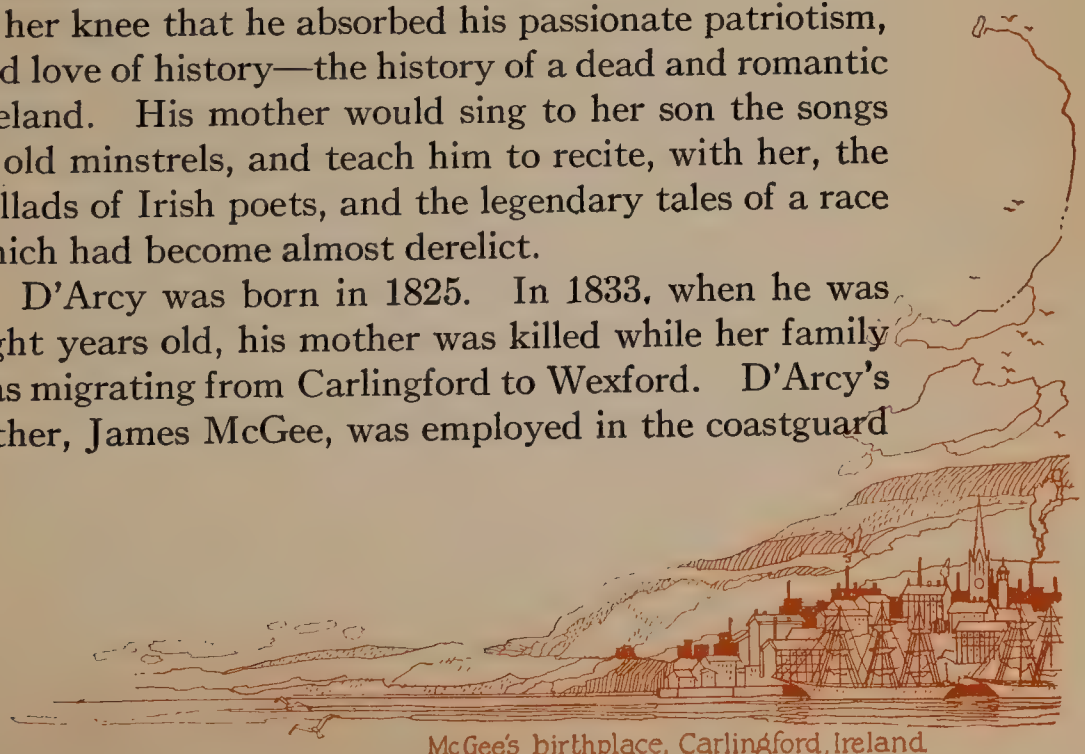
Thomas D'Arcy McGee

THOMAS D'ARCY MCGEE was born in Ireland at Carlingford, the market town and seaport on Carlingford Lough, one of the most beautiful of the thousand beautiful bays which thrust blue water from the sea into the Isle of Erin.

He was the child, as he was proud to relate, "of good rebel blood." His mother's father, a bookseller of Dublin, had been imprisoned, and ruined, for the part he played in the insurrection of the United Irishmen. With the exception of his father, all the men of his family had taken part in the rising of 1798, and most of them had suffered, perhaps fantastically, in the cause of revolution. "My sires were heirs to her holy cause," he sang as a youthful poet, giving voice to his dream of a perfect Ireland.

It was from his mother that he inherited the poetic mysticism which dominated his spiritual life, and it was at her knee that he absorbed his passionate patriotism, and love of history—the history of a dead and romantic Ireland. His mother would sing to her son the songs of old minstrels, and teach him to recite, with her, the ballads of Irish poets, and the legendary tales of a race which had become almost derelict.

D'Arcy was born in 1825. In 1833, when he was eight years old, his mother was killed while her family was migrating from Carlingford to Wexford. D'Arcy's father, James McGee, was employed in the coastguard

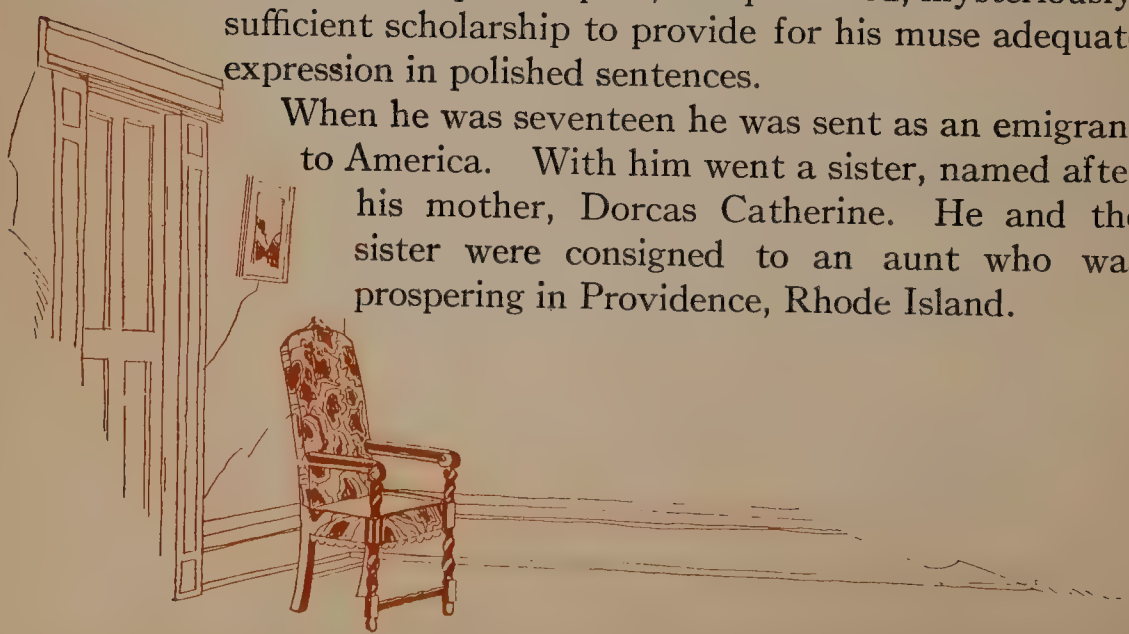


McGee's birthplace, Carlingford, Ireland

service, and though a poor man, was, at that period in Ireland, counted a man of substance.

After his mother's death D'Arcy was sent to the local school—a rural institution of which the pedagogue belonged to the class known as the hedge schoolmaster. This quaint description means that he was a master of the cane, and in all probability had some knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. D'Arcy was a quick scholar; he soon exhausted the educational supply of the hedge schoolmaster, but he continued to learn, promiscuously, from books he obtained from every possible source.

As a boy he gave evidence of that extraordinary gift of fluent speech which distinguished him throughout life. He became a member of a juvenile temperance society, and his boyish harangues became locally famous. In fact the fame of the boy orator spread beyond the confines of his native town. Visitors from distant places were invited to listen to the inspired speech of this strange prodigy, whom the Catholic father superintendent of the temperance society never failed to produce on important occasions. No doubt the same good priest assisted greatly in the education of his protege, for we find D'Arcy, at the age of sixteen writing finished verse. Even at that early age he was embued with the true poetic spirit, and possessed, mysteriously, sufficient scholarship to provide for his muse adequate expression in polished sentences.



When he was seventeen he was sent as an emigrant to America. With him went a sister, named after his mother, Dorcas Catherine. He and the sister were consigned to an aunt who was prospering in Providence, Rhode Island.

These two young people landed at Boston one fair morning in June, and for a month the youngsters lived quietly with their relations in a quiet suburb a few miles from the city. D'Arcy was eager to begin earning his own livelihood, also he was anxious to see the Fourth of July celebrations in a big American city. So he returned to Boston, where the excitement of the celebration of the great day of Independence fired the imagination of the young Irish poet and immigrant. The music and the oratory, the gun fire, and the splutter of fireworks, became too much for the boy to endure in silence. He jumped to the front seat of an empty cart, and flung at the crowd a fiery and eloquent speech, a fury of words which held a great number of people spellbound for more than half an hour.

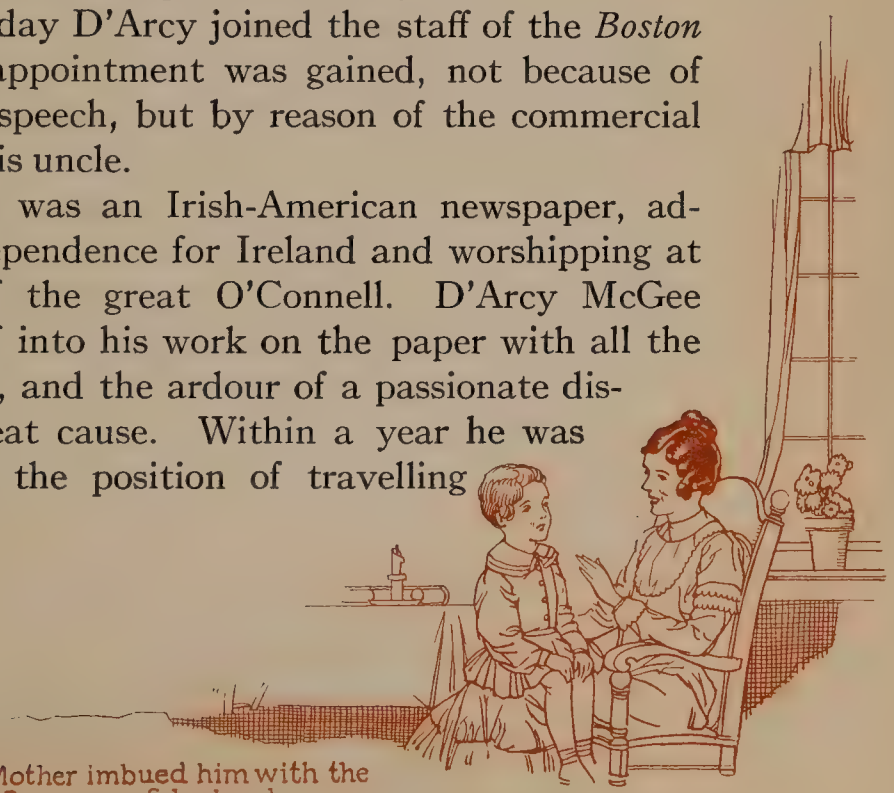
"Who is it?" people cried.

"Only a little curly-headed Paddy," someone answered.

"I wish to God then," said another, "that such curly-headed Paddies as that would come to us by shiploads; any country could feel proud of that youth."

The next day D'Arcy joined the staff of the *Boston Pilot*. The appointment was gained, not because of his eloquent speech, but by reason of the commercial influence of his uncle.

The *Pilot* was an Irish-American newspaper, advocating independence for Ireland and worshipping at the shrine of the great O'Connell. D'Arcy McGee threw himself into his work on the paper with all the zeal of youth, and the ardour of a passionate disciple of a great cause. Within a year he was promoted to the position of travelling



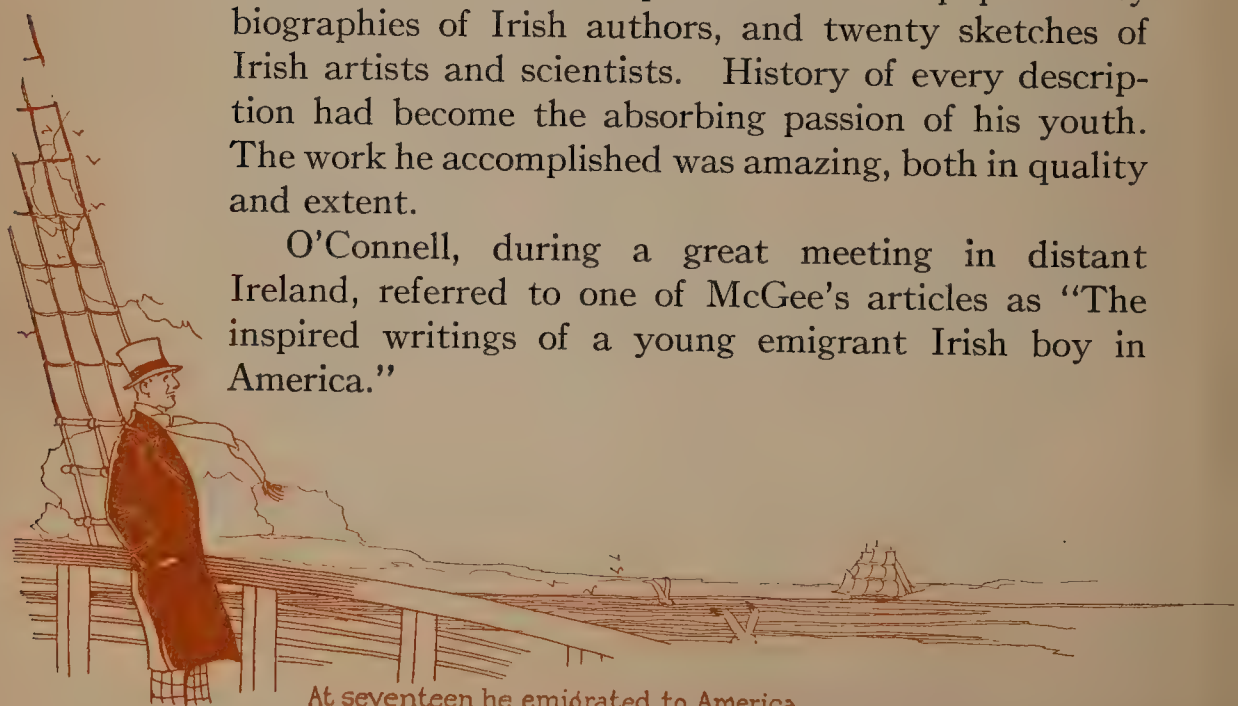
His Mother imbued him with the Romance of Ireland

agent, and special correspondent. He journeyed from village to village, city to city, preaching the cause of Ireland, and generally furthering the interests of his paper. His articles attracted attention. They attracted attention, not only in America, but in Ireland. In far off Dublin, the editor of the *Freeman's Journal* noticed these contributions of a new journalist with increasing interest.

D'Arcy was endeavouring to interpret to the people of America the character and message of Daniel O'Connell. The great Irishman had been his hero since those far-off days when he first heard of the message of liberty at his mother's knee in Carlingford. To McGee, O'Connell was the liberator, and so he described him in a hundred speeches throughout America. Before he was nineteen, D'Arcy had written and published a book: *O'Connell and his Friends*. This was issued as a counterblast to the detractors of the great Irishman in the States. Also he had published many editorial articles on behalf of his national hero.

Eighteen months after joining the *Pilot*, D'Arcy was promoted to the position of joint editor. Before he was twenty he had published in his paper thirty biographies of Irish authors, and twenty sketches of Irish artists and scientists. History of every description had become the absorbing passion of his youth. The work he accomplished was amazing, both in quality and extent.

O'Connell, during a great meeting in distant Ireland, referred to one of McGee's articles as "The inspired writings of a young emigrant Irish boy in America."

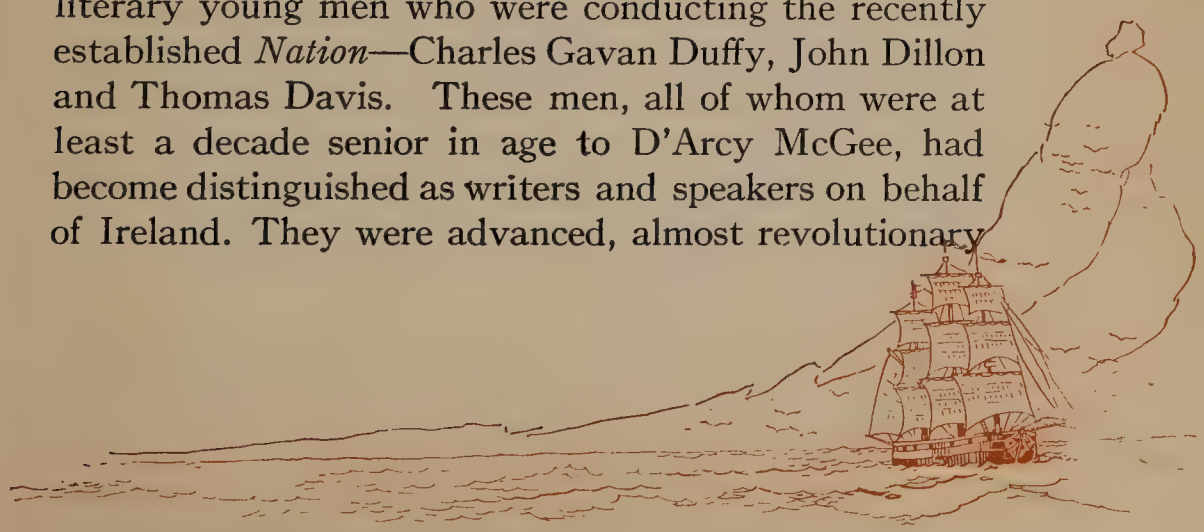


At seventeen he emigrated to America

In the beginning of '45, Wilson Gray, one of the proprietors of the *Freeman's Journal*, offered the young Irish exile "a quite liberal salary" to return to his native land and join the staff of his important newspaper. The offer was accepted, and August '45 found D'Arcy back in Ireland, already recognized as a writer, and a journalist of merit and influence. He was then a youth of just over twenty years, not yet legally a man.

It was designed by the proprietors of the *Freeman's Journal* that the brilliant young recruit from America should become the London correspondent of their paper, whose editorial office was, of course, in Dublin. McGee was in perfect accord with the political outlook of the *Journal*, but he was perhaps, a little unsuited by temperament to its general editorial style. The *Freeman's Journal* was a practical, well conducted newssheet, dealing with everyday affairs in a sound and solid manner. It had little space for literature or art, romanticism, or the history of the dead though glorious era of Ireland's greatness. They required from D'Arcy McGee writings dealing with the facts of the day—straightforward journalism; and nothing else.

Unfortunately, on his journey from Boston to London, McGee tarried for a short time in Dublin, and there he became acquainted with that group of brilliant literary young men who were conducting the recently established *Nation*—Charles Gavan Duffy, John Dillon and Thomas Davis. These men, all of whom were at least a decade senior in age to D'Arcy McGee, had become distinguished as writers and speakers on behalf of Ireland. They were advanced, almost revolutionary

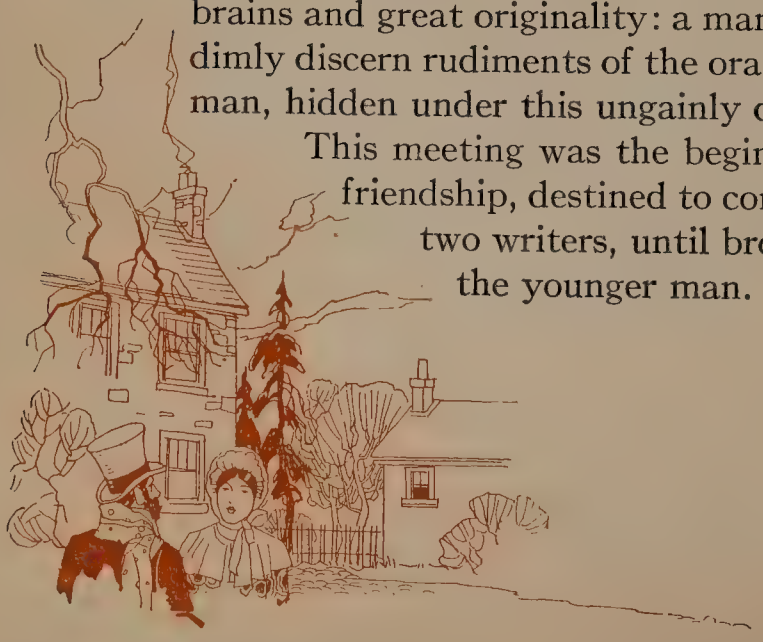


writers; they followed O'Connell, but though following, sought to lead. To D'Arcy McGee the *Nation* represented the ideal journal. Its editors and conductors he admired and envied to an unreasonable degree. It was, perhaps, in this paper that the Young Ireland Movement was created. Certainly its columns were largely responsible for that romantic political firework, which, fashioned and refashioned, finally exploded with the ineffective pop of a damp squib in '48.

Of all these young revolutionists, D'Arcy first met Gavan Duffy; and to the returned emigrant that meeting was a very great event.

It is interesting to record the impression McGee made upon the cultured editor of the *Nation*—the man who was subsequently imprisoned as a dangerous agitator, and yet managed to become Prime Minister of Victoria, Australia, accepting from the British Crown the honour of knighthood.

McGee did not at first appeal to Gavan Duffy. "His dress," wrote the editor, "was slovenly even for the careless class to which he belonged; he looked unformed and had a manner which struck me, at first sight, as too deferential for self-respect. But before he had spoken three sentences, in a sweet and flexible voice, it became obvious that he was a man of fertile brains and great originality: a man in whom one might dimly discern rudiments of the orator, poet, and statesman, hidden under this ungainly disguise."



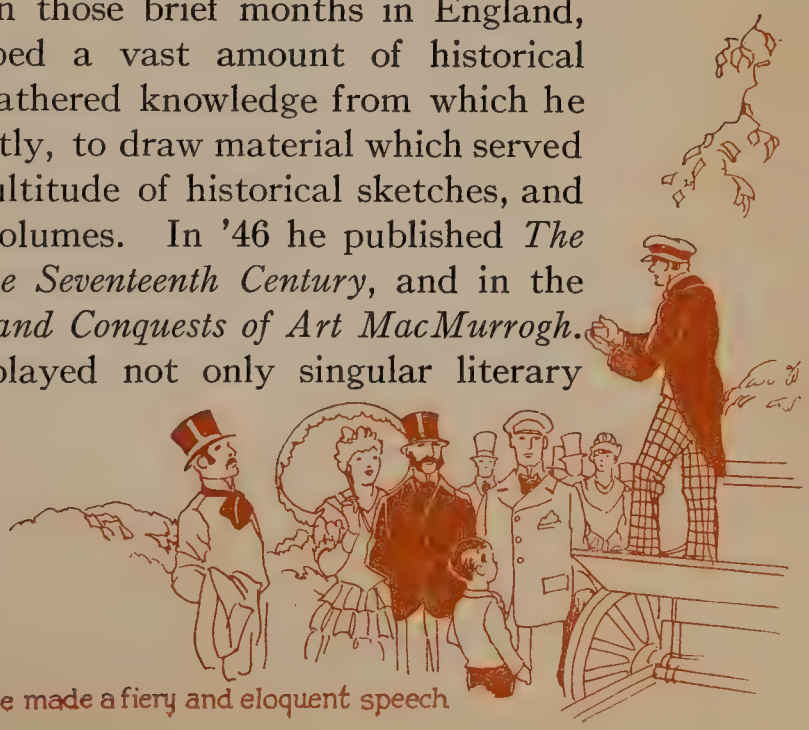
This meeting was the beginning of a wonderful friendship, destined to continue between these two writers, until broken by the death of the younger man.

Through Duffy, McGee soon became intimately acquainted with the members of the staff of the *Nation*, and when at last the *Freeman's* correspondent went to fulfill his journalistic contract, it is to be feared that he took with him but the slenderest interest in his new employment.

In fact he neglected his work—work for which he was paid a generous salary. He spent most of his time in the reading room of the British Museum, studying the ancient history of Ireland, and in writing verse and literary essays for the *Nation*. He considered that he was entitled to do such work in his spare time—during those hours not spent specifically in his labour for the *Freeman's Journal*.

This opinion was not shared by the proprietors of that eminently practical newspaper, and very soon D'Arcy was requested to resign. Though it is possible that he regretted the loss of his regular wage, the young man returned in the happiest frame of mind to Dublin, where Duffy immediately found him a position on the staff of the *Nation*.

McGee had entered London in the autumn of '45; it was in the spring of the following year that he went back to Dublin. In those brief months in England, D'Arcy had absorbed a vast amount of historical literature; he had gathered knowledge from which he was able, subsequently, to draw material which served as the basis of a multitude of historical sketches, and several important volumes. In '46 he published *The Irish Writings of the Seventeenth Century*, and in the following year *Life and Conquests of Art MacMurrogh*. These volumes displayed not only singular literary



He made a fiery and eloquent speech

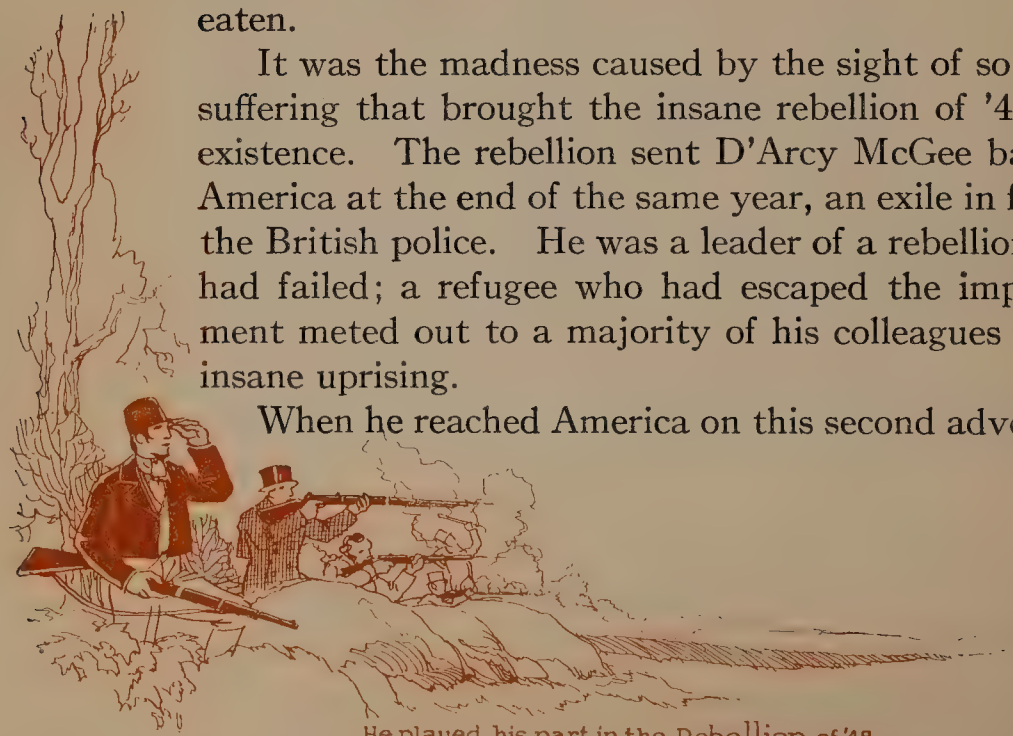
grace, but a profound and intimate knowledge of Irish history. In addition to these serious contributions to Irish historical literature, the youngster flooded the pages of the *Nation* with verse of such high level of excellence, that many of the greatest critics agreed that even in that period of inspired poets, D'Arcy McGee was the greatest of them all.

Naturally the young writer became entangled with the political ravellings of the period. He marched with Duffy, Dillon, and Davis and the others in the van of the Young Ireland Movement, the Irish League, and so on. He played his part in the inglorious rebellion of '48, and was duly exiled, with a price on his head. He spent the eloquence of his tongue and pen prodigiously in the cause of his political romanticism.

A patriot of patriots, mystic and poet, he suffered with all Ireland through the terrible years of famine: that awful period of the failure of potato crop which starved the country from '45 to '47. He was the helpless spectator of the agony of his people as they died—literally of starvation; and of the fever born of things eaten, horrible things, which should not have been eaten.

It was the madness caused by the sight of so much suffering that brought the insane rebellion of '48 into existence. The rebellion sent D'Arcy McGee back to America at the end of the same year, an exile in fear of the British police. He was a leader of a rebellion that had failed; a refugee who had escaped the imprisonment meted out to a majority of his colleagues in the insane uprising.

When he reached America on this second adventure



He played his part in the Rebellion of '48

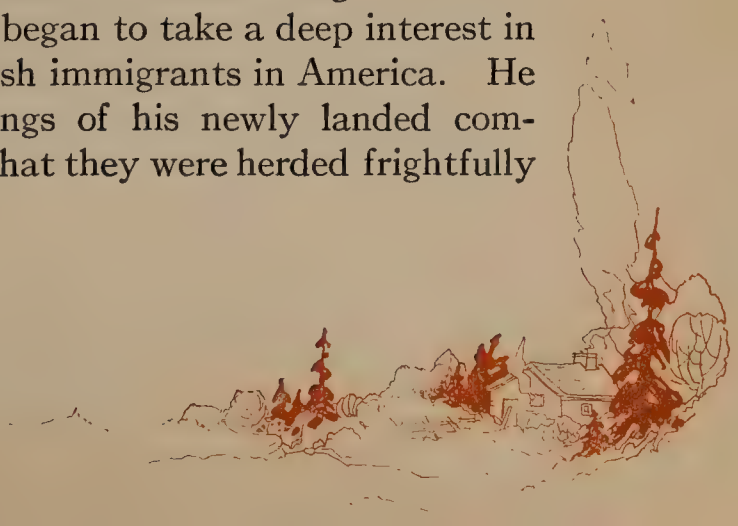
of emigration, he was just twenty-three years of age. He had been forced to leave behind in Ireland a young wife, whom he had married in Dublin in the days of his fury of activity on Duffy's *Nation*.

He arrived in Philadelphia in September '48. By the end of the following month he had issued the first number of a new journal, the *New York Nation*. This he published in the three cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. How this publication was accomplished remains a mystery; the total capital McGee possessed at this time amounted to about seven pounds sterling.

The *New York Nation* gained immediately the bitter enmity of all the Irish-American press. Also, a disaster more serious, the frown of the Roman Catholic Church. McGee was unguarded in his remarks as to the apathy, or enmity, of the Irish Catholic priests in regard to the reform movement—the absurdity of '48. He was not merely unguarded, he was publicly unjust. The wrath of the Catholic leaders fell upon him, and his *New York Nation*.

The recognized American head of the church, Bishop John Hughes, sometimes called the fighting bishop, was the leader of the forces against young McGee. The attack was bitter. Nothing the new editor ventured to describe or discuss met with the approval of Bishop Hughes or his followers. The attack was not only bitter, it was unreasonable and devastating.

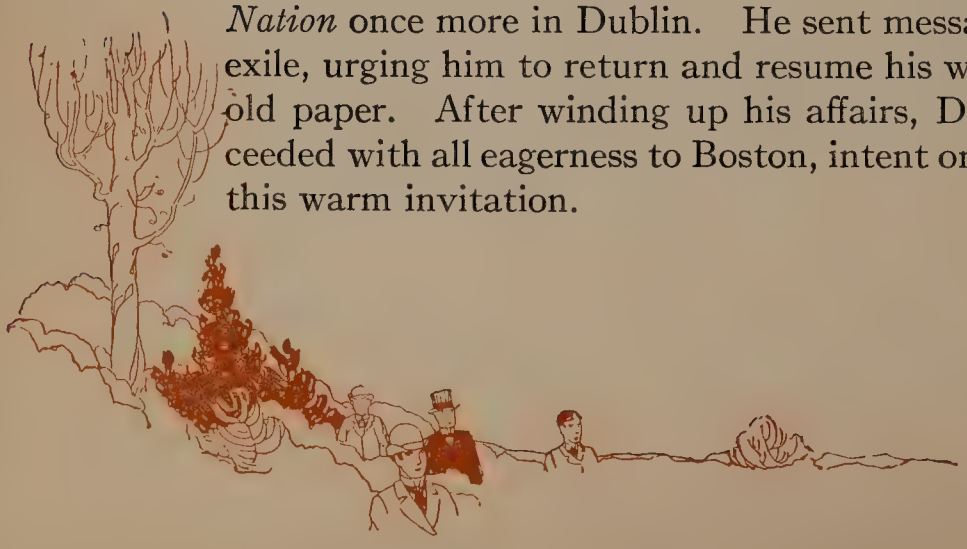
Meanwhile D'Arcy began to take a deep interest in the condition of the Irish immigrants in America. He found that the sufferings of his newly landed compatriots were awful. That they were herded frightfully



in dirty tenement houses; distributed in squalid crowds in rooms lacking elementary sanitary arrangements; and that for them mere rudimentary decency was impossible. Such scandals as these McGee ventilated in his *New York Nation*, but Bishop Hughes attacked him even on that account. Nothing the young writer did could please the Roman Church. He instituted night-clubs to educate the ignorant peasants fresh from their native isle, but even that offended the Bishop. He lectured the newly arrived on temperance, on the need of cleanliness; he begged them to go West, to leave the crowded cities. All to no effect. The Bishop saw, in all these efforts of the young journalist, an attempt to keep the Irish immigrant apart from the other American citizens. The night schools and lecture halls he described as "red hot Irishism." "The Irish," wrote the Bishop, "do not require the strong doses of patriotism which McGee administers."

The effect of all this was that D'Arcy wound up the *New York Nation*, and the paper ceased to exist. But the night schools, as an institution, took deeper root, and remain in existence to this day. Within fifteen years of their inception by McGee, twenty thousand immigrants—chiefly Irish and German peasants—attended night schools in New York City.

By this time Duffy had recovered somewhat from the effects of the rebellion, and was publishing the *Nation* once more in Dublin. He sent messages to the exile, urging him to return and resume his work on the old paper. After winding up his affairs, D'Arcy proceeded with all eagerness to Boston, intent on accepting this warm invitation.

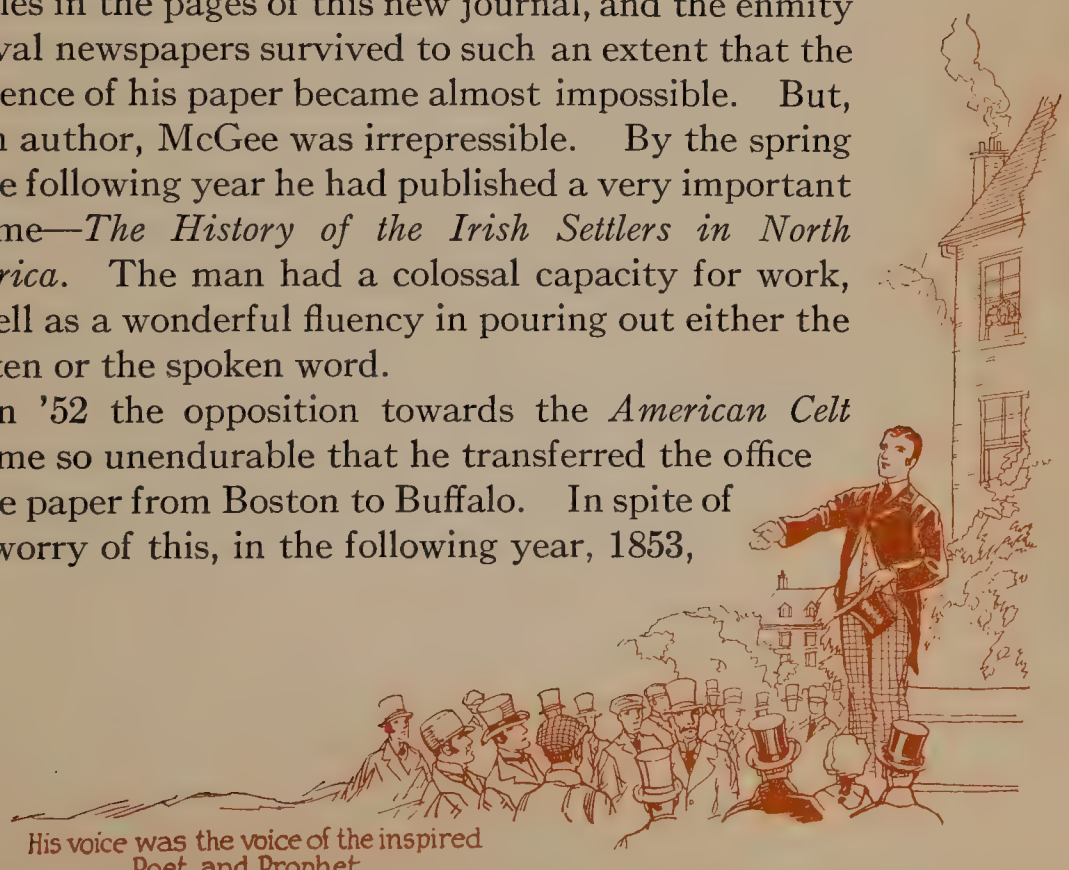


But at the American port he was confronted with evil tidings. He received news, of an official nature, on no account to return to Ireland so soon. He was warned in the strongest terms that imprisonment, if not death, would be his portion as soon as he set foot on Irish soil.

So, in a condition of dreadful depression, D'Arcy was forced to remain in exile. In order to sustain a bare existence he lectured throughout the eastern States, telling his audience of Irish history and talking about freedom, until, as a result of his eloquence, he was able to collect sufficient money to start another newspaper.

His financial backers in this new venture were largely workers of the artisan class—young Irish labouring men. He printed the first number of his new sheet in the August of 1850; it appeared under the title of the *American Celt.* The deep interest he took in Irish immigration continued in the form of many articles in the pages of this new journal, and the enmity of rival newspapers survived to such an extent that the existence of his paper became almost impossible. But, as an author, McGee was irrepressible. By the spring of the following year he had published a very important volume—*The History of the Irish Settlers in North America.* The man had a colossal capacity for work, as well as a wonderful fluency in pouring out either the written or the spoken word.

In '52 the opposition towards the *American Celt* became so unendurable that he transferred the office of the paper from Boston to Buffalo. In spite of the worry of this, in the following year, 1853,



His voice was the voice of the inspired Poet and Prophet

he published a remarkable theological study, *The Catholic History of North America.*

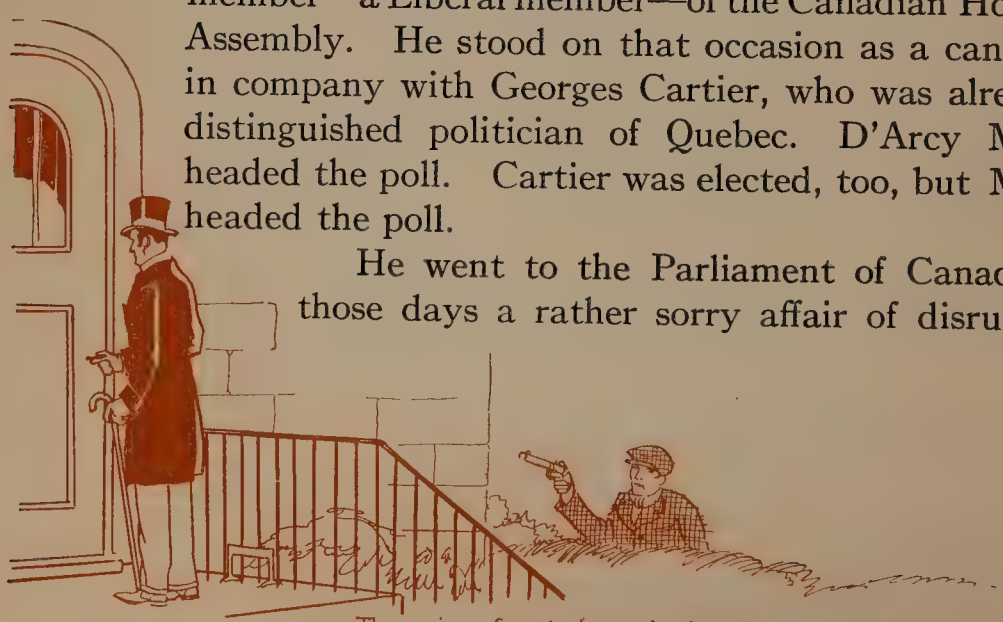
In '52 he made his first acquaintance with Canada, and the Canadian people. During an extended lecture tour of the larger towns of the Canadas, he obtained first hand knowledge of the new settlements in British North America. The condition of freedom existing in those great British provinces impressed McGee in a most remarkable manner. He saw in Canada a country more suitable for the settlement of Irish immigrants than he found in the American republic.

A second lecture tour in '54 confirmed these impressions. He became acquainted with a number of important men in Montreal.

These Montrealers persuaded him to cease his rebel talk and writings; to accept, in Canada, the country of his dreams of freedom. This was an easy matter, for the exiled Irishman had already realized that in these North American provinces, which lived in harmony with Britain, there existed a liberty untrammeled; and for them a future, in its greatness, infinite.

He came to Montreal, and because of the glory of his eloquence, was immediately accepted as a political leader. Within a few months he was elected as a member—a Liberal member—of the Canadian House of Assembly. He stood on that occasion as a candidate in company with Georges Cartier, who was already a distinguished politician of Quebec. D'Arcy McGee headed the poll. Cartier was elected, too, but McGee headed the poll.

He went to the Parliament of Canada—in those days a rather sorry affair of disruption.



The noise of a shot crashed out

John A. Macdonald and George Brown, Sandfield Macdonald and half a dozen other men, were fighting the fight which was to end in Confederation.

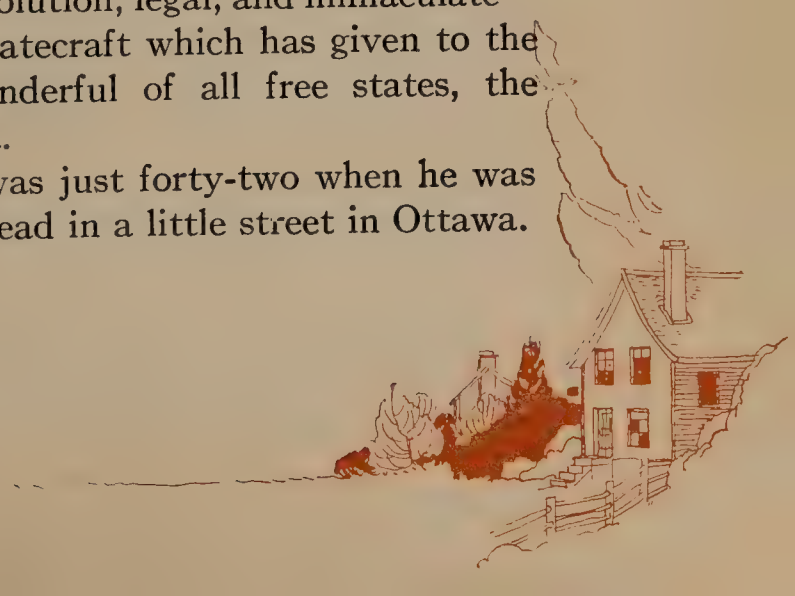
McGee became a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Sandfield Macdonald. He distinguished himself greatly as an orator, but achieved some enmity as a political genius of rather well advertised bohemian tendencies. Almost all the great men loved him; a few trusted him. His voice was the voice of an inspired prophet and poet; in all Canada there was no other man so eloquent. But there is little doubt that D'Arcy had eccentric habits.

He became a great friend of John A. Macdonald, thus gaining the hostility of George Brown—a man who had always been his friend, though it must be said that to the end Brown remained an admirer of the Irishman's wonderful genius.

On the eve of Confederation McGee went through the Canadas, and the Maritimes, preaching Confederation, and converting multitudes. He became one of the great group who went to the meetings in Prince Edward Island, and to Quebec. His position as one of the leaders of Confederation is unassailable.

But, ere he could accept office in the first cabinet of the Dominion, he was shot by an Irish fanatic; a man who imagined that this great man, D'Arcy McGee, had been false to revolution, because he had become associated with a revolution, legal, and immaculate—that revolution of statecraft which has given to the world the most wonderful of all free states, the Dominion of Canada.

D'Arcy McGee was just forty-two when he was assassinated—shot dead in a little street in Ottawa.



He had come from the House, where he had, with great eloquence, defended the work being done by Dr. Tupper in England, in regard to the Nova Scotian outburst over Confederation.

Little is known of the real motive behind this atrocious crime. When the debate ended, and the House rose, D'Arcy McGee called to his friend, Robert Macfarlane: "Come Bob, you young rascal, help me on with my coat."

"Always ready to give you a lift, McGee," replied Macfarlane. And the two men left the House.

Macfarlane left McGee at the corner of Metcalfe and Sparks Streets. As they parted, a little group of messengers passed on their homeward journey.

One of these shouted, "Goodnight, Mr. McGee."

"Good morning—it's morning now, Buckley," replied the statesman.

Turning to the door of his house, he inserted the key in the lock, when the noise of a shot crashed out.

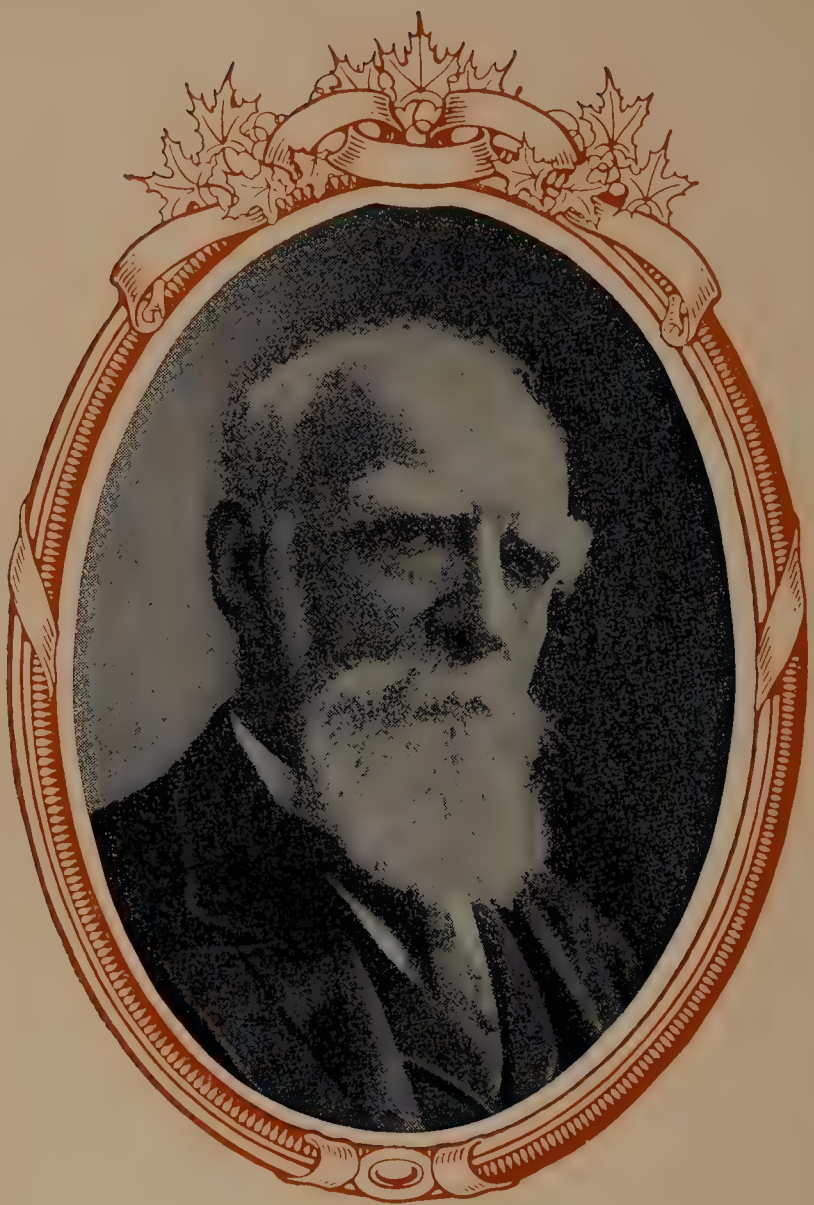
He fell; the bullet had entered his brain. D'Arcy McGee never spoke again.

Patrick Whelan, a Fenian, was arrested, and shortly afterwards hanged.

Never has death come more suddenly than it came to D'Arcy McGee.

It remains a great thing, this defence by McGee of Tupper in Ottawa. Also it remains an affair of some ironic importance in history that D'Arcy's last public act should have been that of voicing the defence of a man, whom, least of all, he resembled in public life—Tupper; against the man whom he most nearly resembled—Joseph Howe.

Lord Strathcona



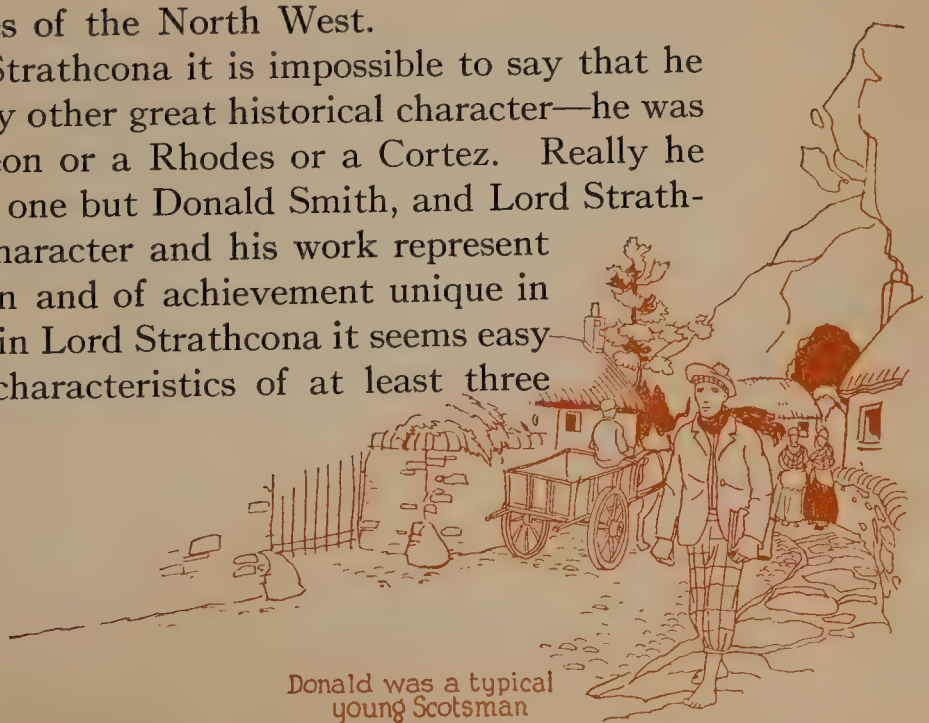
Lord Strathcona

1820-1914

Lord Strathcona

Sir Donald Smith, Lord Strathcona, was a simple man of noble character, endowed with a genius which enabled him to rise to the height of great occasions. He was a strong man of normal gifts who achieved abnormal success by consistently pursuing the rigid path of duty. Thirty years of his adult life were spent in loneliness; in working under conditions which frequently entailed stupendous suffering. From the age of twenty, until he had become a middle-aged man of fifty, he laboured as an obscure trader, lacking promotion, in the inhospitable wastes of Labrador. Emerging from the frozen bay of Ungava, and the ice-fields of Labrador, at that mature age he started life afresh. For almost another fifty years he lived a great life, splendidly; he achieved world-wide fame as a statesman, as a builder of railways, a diplomatist, a financier, and philanthropist. His manhood was spent in Canada; and, in a sense, he was the father of the new provinces of the North West.

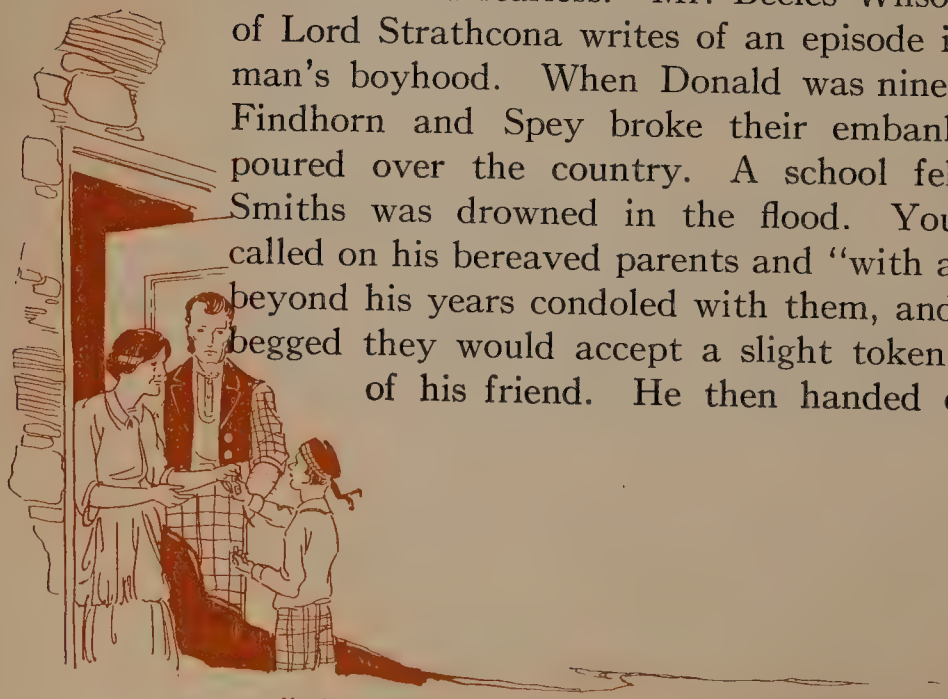
Of Lord Strathcona it is impossible to say that he resembled any other great historical character—he was not a Napoleon or a Rhodes or a Cortez. Really he resembled no one but Donald Smith, and Lord Strathcona. His character and his work represent a type of man and of achievement unique in history. For in Lord Strathcona it seems easy to find the characteristics of at least three



Donald was a typical young Scotsman

different types of men. There was Donald Smith the fur trader and pioneer agricultural experimentalist of Labrador; the Donald Smith who saved Canada from a dangerous half-breed uprising in the West, assisted in the building for Canada of her first transcontinental railway, and made for himself several millions of dollars; and Lord Strathcona, diplomat and ambassador for Canada in England and Europe, multi-millionaire, great philanthropist and splendid patriot. A Baron of England and of Canada, whom King Edward VII. greeted affectionately as "dear old uncle Donald," and a hostile German press described as "that arrogant Canadian, Lord Strathcona."

Donald Alexander Smith was born in the little Highland town of Forres, Scotland, in the year 1820. His parents were people of ancient lineage, unblessed with a superabundance of worldly wealth. There was no money to spare for the education of Donald or his elder brother John, who were, in consequence, instructed in the mysteries of reading, writing and arithmetic in the Free School at Forres. As a youth Donald was a typical young Highlander; shy and proud, but amiable; stubborn and fearless. Mr. Becles Wilson in his life of Lord Strathcona writes of an episode in this great man's boyhood. When Donald was nine, the Rivers Findhorn and Spey broke their embankments and poured over the country. A school fellow of the Smiths was drowned in the flood. Young Donald called on his bereaved parents and "with a gravity far beyond his years condoled with them, and on leaving begged they would accept a slight token in memory of his friend. He then handed over all his



He then handed over all his pocket money

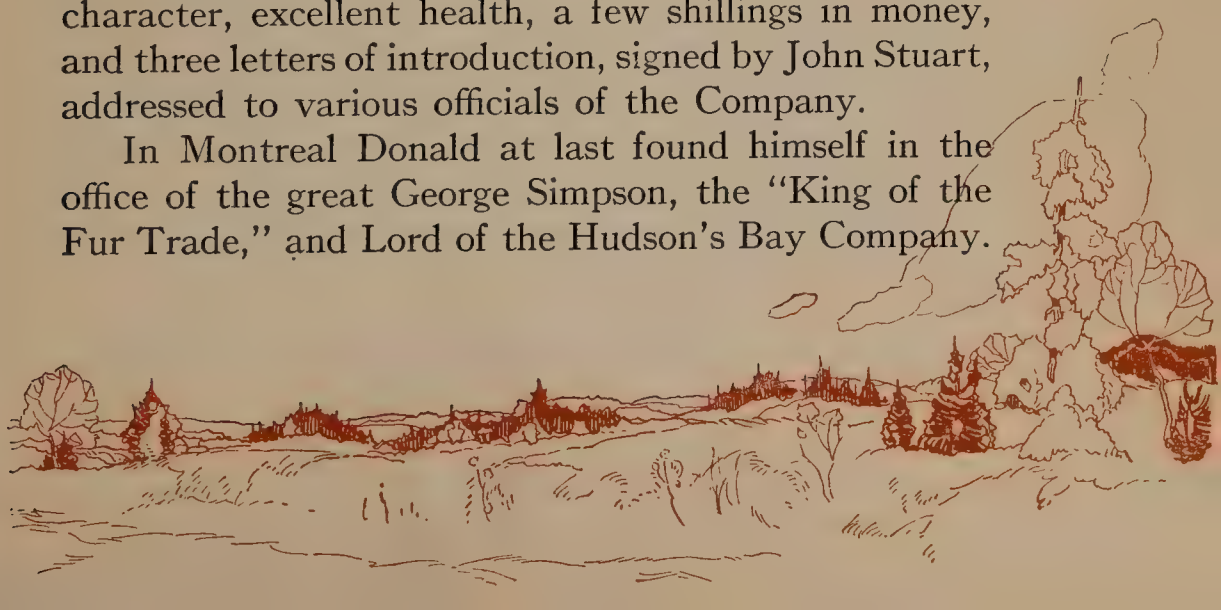
pocket money, amounting to a shilling and some odd coppers."

Donald found early inspiration for the life of a fur trader in the remote and romantic territories of the Hudson's Bay Company through the example of a maternal uncle, John Stuart, an early pioneer of the far North West. This John Stuart had accompanied Simon Fraser in his journeys among the Rockies and the Pacific slopes. He was a distinguished frontiersman and trader, whose name can be found in several old records of the pioneer days.

It may be assumed that throughout the years of his boyhood and early youth, young Donald was constantly inspired to hero worship of this uncle whose splendid adventures must have dazzled the humble cottagers in the remote Scottish hamlet. His mother's two brothers had each been pioneers in the great North West. John Stuart was the more eminent, but the other, Robert, had died, heroically, in attempting to save the lives of some companions in the district of the Columbia River. After John Stuart had held the high position of Chief Factor at Lesser Slave Lake, he retired from the service. It was he who introduced young Donald to the Hudson's Bay Company.

At the age of eighteen, Smith sailed from London for Canada; his total capital consisted of a strong character, excellent health, a few shillings in money, and three letters of introduction, signed by John Stuart, addressed to various officials of the Company.

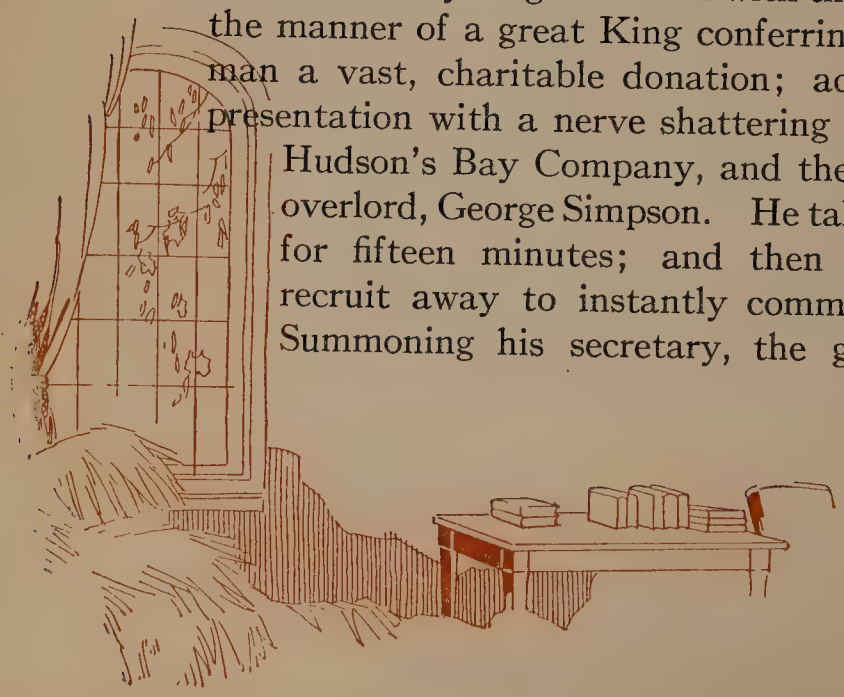
In Montreal Donald at last found himself in the office of the great George Simpson, the "King of the Fur Trade," and Lord of the Hudson's Bay Company.



Simpson was an extraordinary man; he was a person of outstanding greatness and something of a mountebank. In spite of a peevish temperament, and an absurd weakness of jealousy, Simpson was a magnificent organizer, and a governor of commanding genius. His personality was grotesque, by reason of his inordinate vanity. Because of a fancied facial resemblance to the Corsican genius, he preferred to present the outward appearance of a pinchback Napoleon rather than that of a great and honest Simpson. He had the mind, and almost the genius, of a Clive, coupled with the onward characteristics of a Latin play-actor.

This was the man Donald Smith confronted when he sought employment with the great fur trading company; and this was the man who was largely responsible for Smith's banishment for nearly thirty years in the wastes of Labrador and the wilderness of Ungava. For it was Simpson's evil habit to banish men who showed signs of exceptional merit; he desired the presence at headquarters of no man whose ability might rival his own.

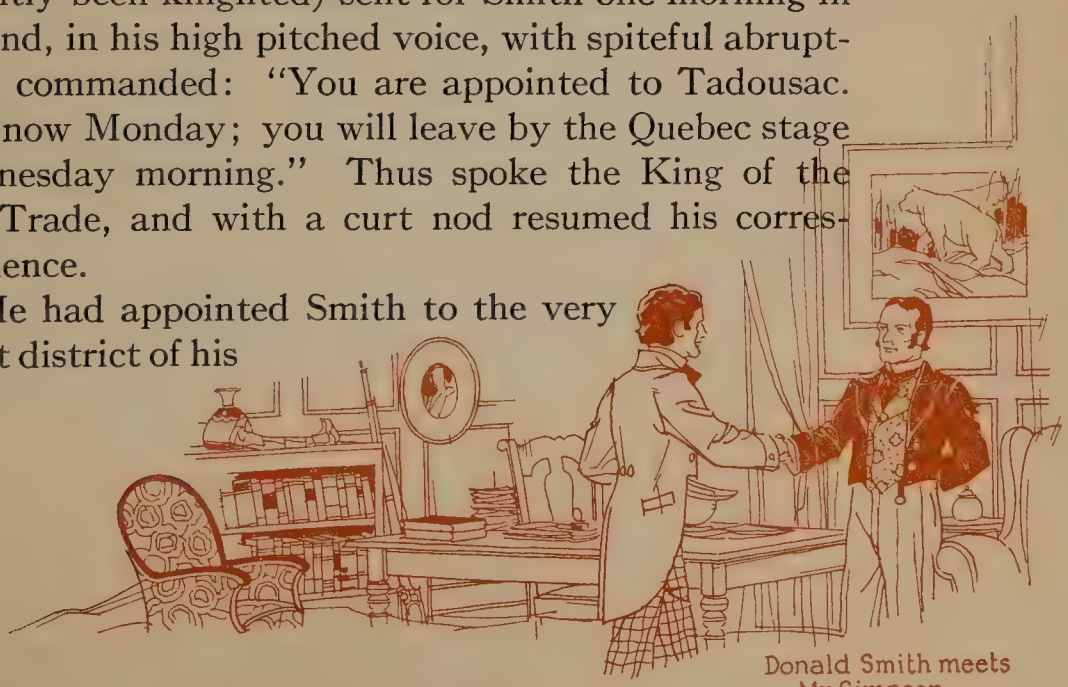
Simpson engaged Smith as an apprentice-clerk at a salary of twenty pounds ($100.00) per annum. He presented the young Scotsman with the appointment in the manner of a great King conferring upon a beggar-man a vast, charitable donation; accompanying the presentation with a nerve shattering panegyric of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the greatness of its overlord, George Simpson. He talked and strutted for fifteen minutes; and then sent the young recruit away to instantly commence his duties. Summoning his secretary, the great man said:



"Mr. Mactavish, have the goodness to take Mr. Donald Smith to the fur room and instruct him in the art of counting rat skins." Thus was the future Lord Strathcona introduced to his profession.

For three years young Smith counted rat skins and learned the other duties attached to the position he had obtained. On occasions he was sent to posts in various districts of Quebec; and during these visits he acquired a knowledge of the French language. He lived, while in Montreal, with his fellow clerks, in the Company's boarding house for the "indentured young gentlemen" at Lachine. Here the young gentlemen were sometimes visited by Simpson's wife, an attractive lady of kindly nature, who occasionally lightened the rather dark and obscure lives of the apprentices by her presence. Once or twice she invited one or two of the youngsters to her own drawing room. Smith was so honoured on several occasions, with the result that the absurd Simpson became insanely jealous of his young clerk. From the beginning he had never liked the youngster, and the fact that his wife showed the boy some kindness seemed to increase his displeasure. Probably it was because of this that Sir George (he had recently been knighted) sent for Smith one morning in '41 and, in his high pitched voice, with spiteful abruptness, commanded: "You are appointed to Tadousac. It is now Monday; you will leave by the Quebec stage Wednesday morning." Thus spoke the King of the Fur Trade, and with a curt nod resumed his correspondence.

He had appointed Smith to the very worst district of his

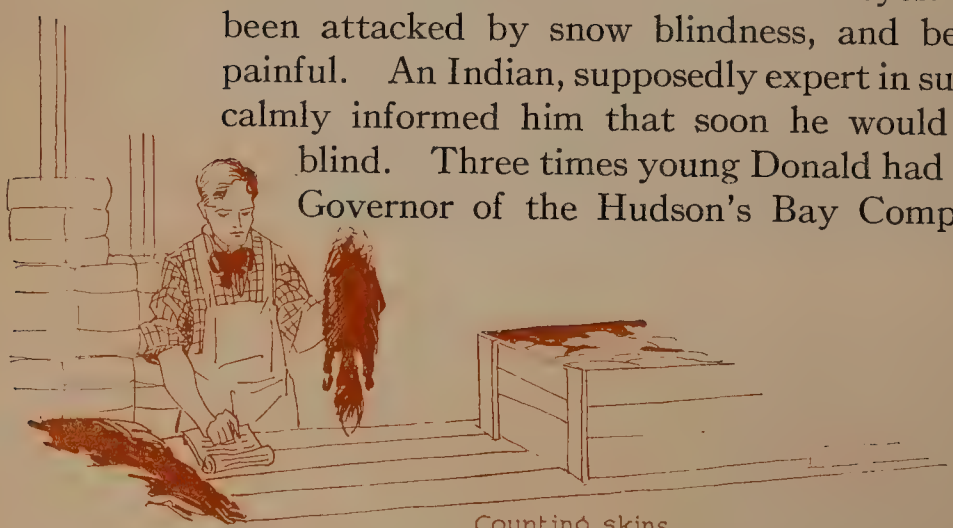


Donald Smith meets Mr. Simpson

vast domain. For Tadousac was the centre of an inhospitable country, poor in trade and rich only in discomfort. It was a place notorious for bad food and keen competition, and, worst of all, it had come to be regarded a preliminary training ground for men destined for Labrador and Ungava . . . places in the remote wilderness.

In obedience to orders, Donald Smith set forth by the Quebec stage and duly arrived at Tadousac, which for the next seven years, constituted his home. During these years of monotony and appalling loneliness, Smith must frequently have wondered why he, the nephew of a man justly famous among the people of the distant West, should be buried among the uninhabited wastes of the East. But, though he may have been conscious of the bitterness of Simpson's spiteful behaviour, he never complained. He carried on with his monotonous duties, visiting adjacent stations on the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay, mixing with Indian hunters and trappers and half-breed traders, and he began to understand the strange people of the strange unsheltered districts. He gained much from the fine companionship of books, and amidst the lonely magnificence of the country in which the rich years of his youth were squandered in semi-exile, he acquired instinctively the splendid characteristic of profound self-restraint.

In '47 Smith had trouble with his eyes. They had been attacked by snow blindness, and became very painful. An Indian, supposedly expert in such matters, calmly informed him that soon he would be totally blind. Three times young Donald had written the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company of his



Counting skins

affliction, asking advice and assistance; but no notice had been taken of his letters. So, because of his agony and the fear of blindness, he at last decided to leave his post and journey to Montreal to demand attention.

He made the voyage easily, by schooner. Immediately on arrival he called on the Governor, who happened to be at dinner. Donald was kept waiting in the library while my "Lord of the Fur Trade and the Plains" finished his meal. Afterwards the young man was fed, and a medical man summoned. Simpson superintended the examination. The Doctor declared that nothing serious was the matter with the eyes, he prescribed a remedy, and scoffed at the suggestion of blindness.

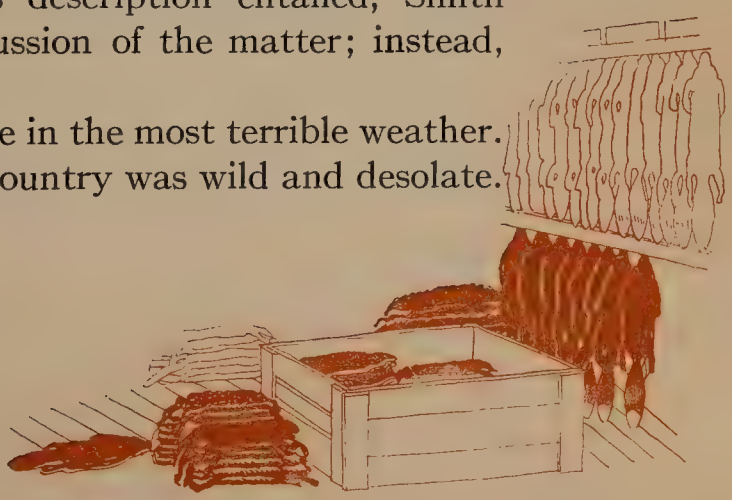
"No danger of blindness," shouted Simpson, "then this is a serious case of indiscipline. . . . It is now eight o'clock—I will give you thirty minutes to leave Montreal for your new post."

"New post?" faltered Smith.

"Yes, you are appointed to the Esquimaux Bay district, and will report yourself to Mr. Nourse at North West River post. There will be no stage available at Quebec, so you will proceed on foot via Seven Islands and Mingan to St. Augustine, and from there overland. Good night sir." And Simpson strode away.

Because he was too proud to funk the colossal hardships a journey of this description entailed, Smith refrained from any discussion of the matter; instead, he started forthwith.

The journey was made in the most terrible weather. It was mid-winter; the country was wild and desolate.

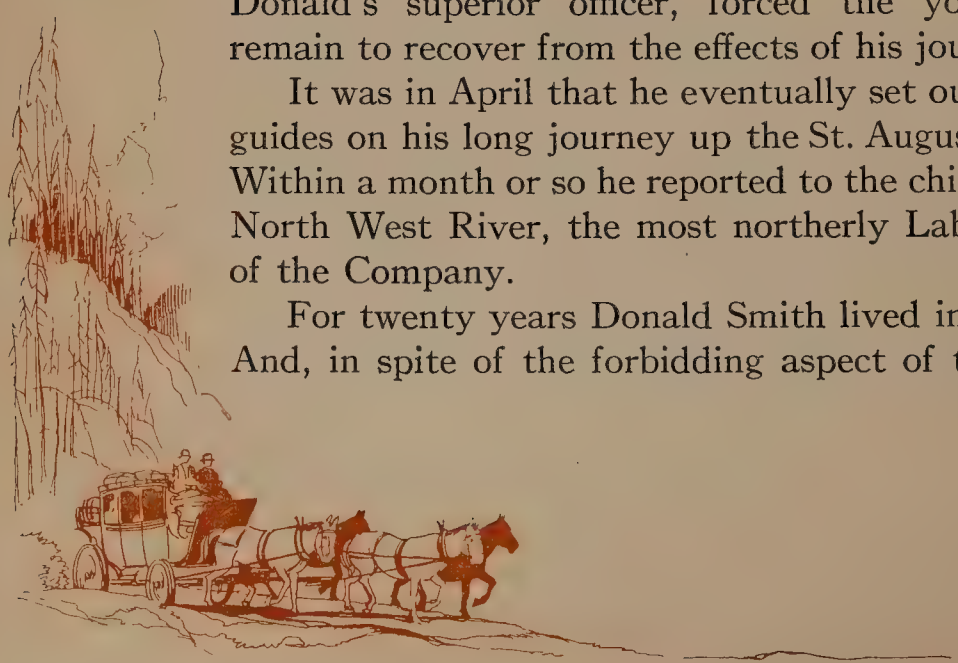


With the utmost difficulty, Smith persuaded two Indians to accompany him as guides. From Bersimits they started out for Seven Islands; five days later they discovered that they were lost in the wilderness. A blinding snowstorm was raging, and already they had run short of provisions. Smith's feet were frost bitten, and his eyes were causing him frightful agony. One of the Indians had fallen sick, and all three were suffering from exhaustion. On the tenth day the sick Indian was unable to proceed; they built a fire and made a supper of a little moss boiled with the skin of a beaver. The next day Smith and the sound Indian went scouting for food; they returned at night with "the remains of a marten" to find their sick companion very ill indeed. That night was bitterly cold; they had exhausted their supply of fuel and the fire went out. The Indian died before dawn.

Six days later the two survivors staggered into Mingan. After a day or two's rest, in spite of the weather, Smith set out again on his terrible journey. Now he was alone; the surviving Indian had refused to take further risks. But Smith carried on and eventually reached Mashquano. There, the factor, Donald's superior officer, forced the youngster to remain to recover from the effects of his journey.

It was in April that he eventually set out with two guides on his long journey up the St. Augustine River. Within a month or so he reported to the chief trader at North West River, the most northerly Labrador post of the Company.

For twenty years Donald Smith lived in Labrador. And, in spite of the forbidding aspect of the district,

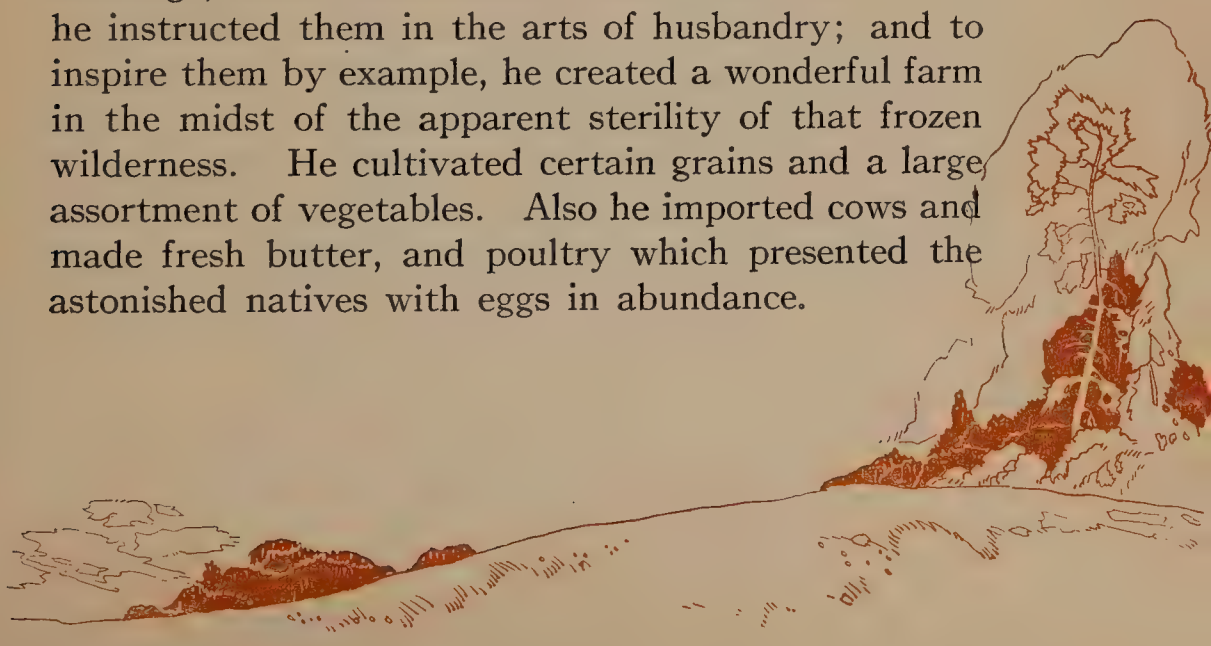


Donald Smith set forth by the Quebec stage

the eternal cold, the loneliness and lack of comfort, he managed to fill his life at Esquimaux Bay with interesting events, and to accomplish much that was of more than transient value. Promotion came to him, but slowly. He was thirty-two before he was made chief trader, though his abundant experience and exemplary character would have justified a far earlier advancement. In '53 he married a lady who was the daughter of Mr. Hardisty, the chief trader of Esquimaux Bay who had succeeded Mr. Nourse, and who was succeeded eventually by Donald Smith.

Throughout long, lonely years he continued to read books of almost every description—except fiction. Political economy, philosophy, history, medicine and divinity were subjects he cared most to study, though he paid some attention to zoology, botany and agriculture. From which it will be gathered that he was a man of a serious nature, not given to flippancy of thought or of action.

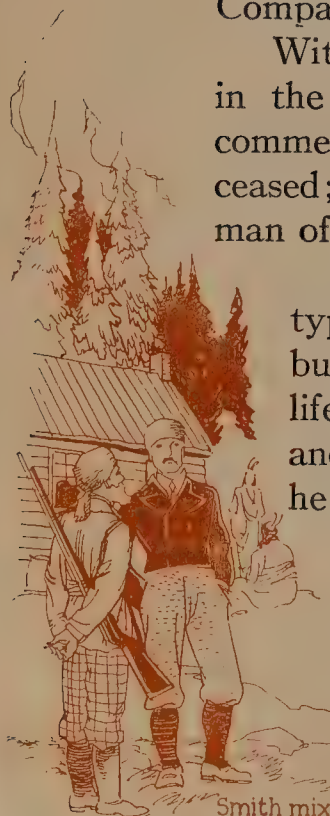
He became a sort of father among the people of his districts; respected alike by the Esquimaux, the Indians and the half-breeds. He instructed them in affairs which made for their well-being. He governed them, and on occasions he joined them together in marriage, healed their sick and buried their dead. Also he instructed them in the arts of husbandry; and to inspire them by example, he created a wonderful farm in the midst of the apparent sterility of that frozen wilderness. He cultivated certain grains and a large assortment of vegetables. Also he imported cows and made fresh butter, and poultry which presented the astonished natives with eggs in abundance.



Donald Smith, the fur trader and Hudson's Bay Company agent, was a remarkable man; quiet and competent; content to accomplish that which came within his duties—all that and a little more. There is little doubt that the man was crushed by lack of opportunity. If he had not been governed by a man of spiteful disposition and jealous temperament, Smith might have reached a position of eminence long before he reached middle age. Simpson, the Fur Trade King, died in the year '60; in '62 Donald Smith was at last promoted "Chief Factor." In '64 he revisited his native land after an absence of twenty-six years. During this visit he saw a great deal of the Directors of the Company in London, who were greatly impressed by the character of "Labrador Smith." Though he returned to the Hudson Bay district for another year or two, in 1868 he was summoned to Montreal, appointed to the charge of the Montreal department, including the Labrador district, and given a comparatively free hand in the conduct of the business of the Company.

With his acceptance of this post the second chapter in the life of Donald Smith may be said to have commenced. His adventures as a pioneer and trader ceased; in Montreal he became an administrator and a man of great affairs.

Smith had always possessed the frugality of the typical Highlander, also he was a shrewd man of business, with a gift for finance. Throughout his life he had made it an unbreakable rule to save and invest at least one-half of his earnings. Also he had persuaded several of his colleagues to

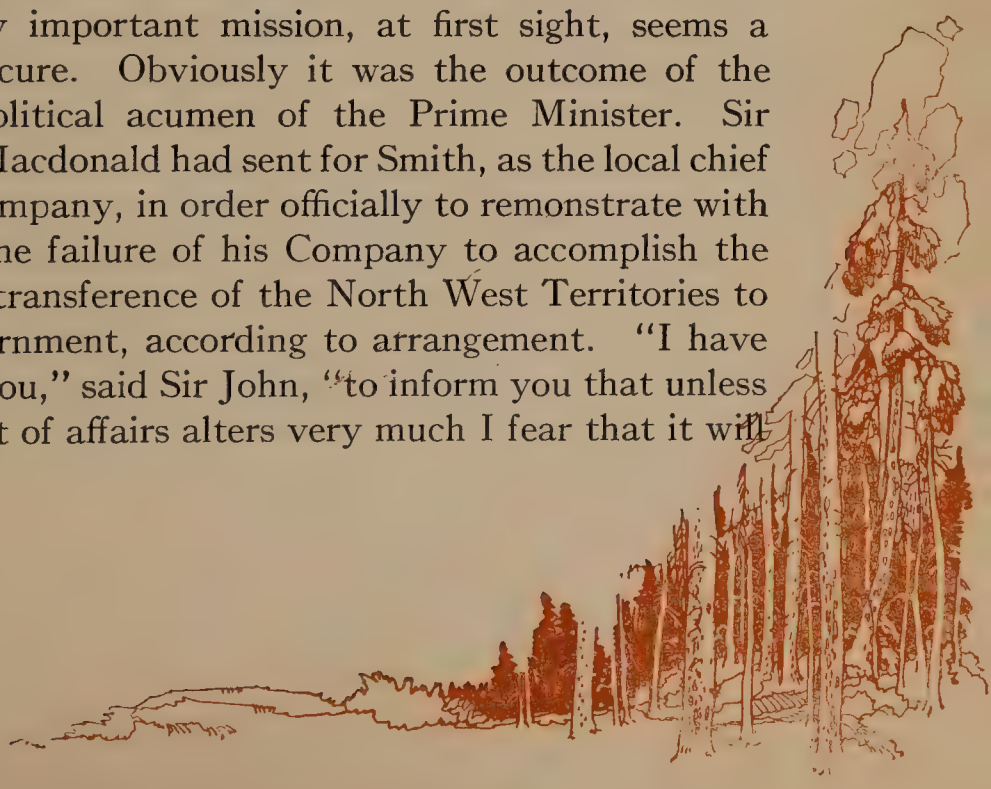


Smith mixed with hunters, trappers and traders

entrust with him their savings, and with these Smith made several highly satisfactory investments. The result was that at the period of his arrival in Montreal he was in possession of several thousands of pounds, most of which he invested in the Bank of Montreal.

This explanation of Donald Smith's financial position, when he left Labrador in '68, is necessary in order to identify the foundation on which he built his colossal fortune. He was exceptionally lucky in discovering, in Montreal, at this period, a first cousin who occupied a position of high importance in the commercial and financial life of the city. This cousin, George Stephen, afterwards Lord Mount Stephen, introduced Smith to several men of commercial importance—E. H. King, Manager of the Bank of Montreal; Hugh Allan, ship-owner—and many people of that description.

Donald Smith's great chance came when he was selected by Sir John A. Macdonald to proceed to Fort Garry, as Canadian Commissioner to Red River, to assist in a peaceful settlement of the Riel Rebellion. The reason for the appointment of a recently appointed manager of the Hudson's Bay Company to this extremely important mission, at first sight, seems a little obscure. Obviously it was the outcome of the astute political acumen of the Prime Minister. Sir John A. Macdonald had sent for Smith, as the local chief of the Company, in order officially to remonstrate with him on the failure of his Company to accomplish the peaceful transference of the North West Territories to the Government, according to arrangement. "I have sent for you," said Sir John, "to inform you that unless the aspect of affairs alters very much I fear that it will

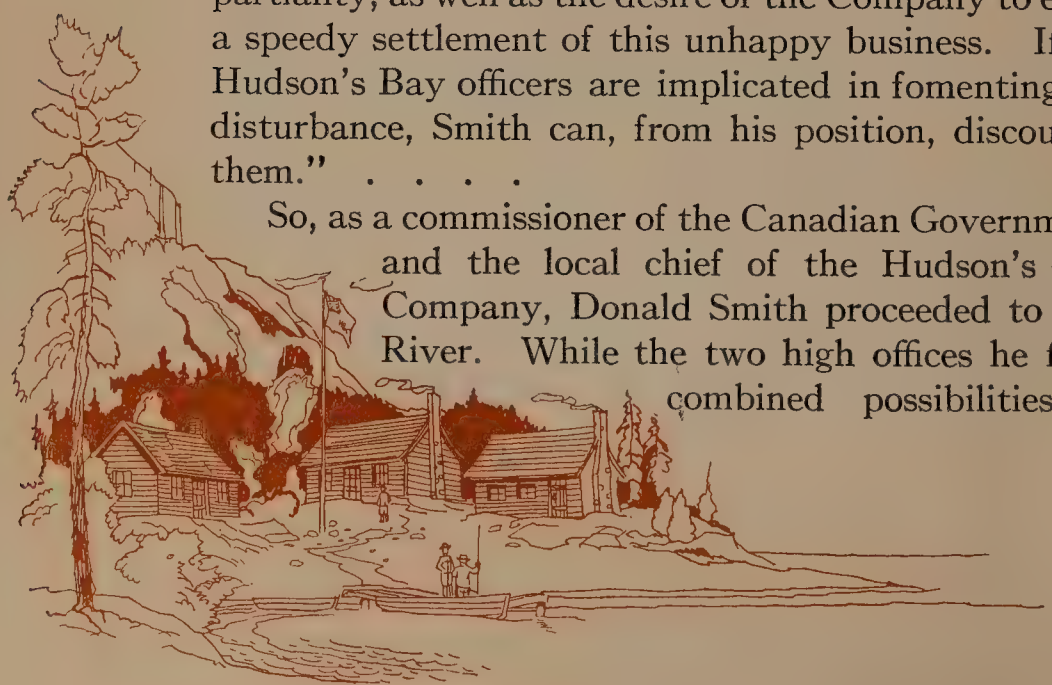


be quite impossible for Canada to fulfil her part of the bargain. and to ascertain what the attitude of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers is towards this outbreak in the North West." Thus the wily statesman warned the Company's official that the Government washed its hands of all blame in regard to the Riel affair.

Smith countered this with " . . . a grave mistake had been committed by the Canadian Government in not securing the co-operation and goodwill of Mr. Mactavish (the North West Governor of the H.B.C.) and Mr. McDougall (the Governor recently appointed by the Canadian Government)."

At this meeting there was considerable conversation. Smith obviously impressed Macdonald with his honesty, loyalty and ability, for we find the Prime Minister writing to the Honourable Joseph Howe, Secretary of State for the Provinces, "I am strongly of opinion that we should make instant use of D. A. Smith. In a chat I had with him to-day he took high ground, declared himself a staunch *Canadian*, and lost no opportunity of emphasizing his own complete impartiality, as well as the desire of the Company to effect a speedy settlement of this unhappy business. If the Hudson's Bay officers are implicated in fomenting the disturbance, Smith can, from his position, discourage them."

So, as a commissioner of the Canadian Government, and the local chief of the Hudson's Bay Company, Donald Smith proceeded to Red River. While the two high offices he filled combined possibilities of



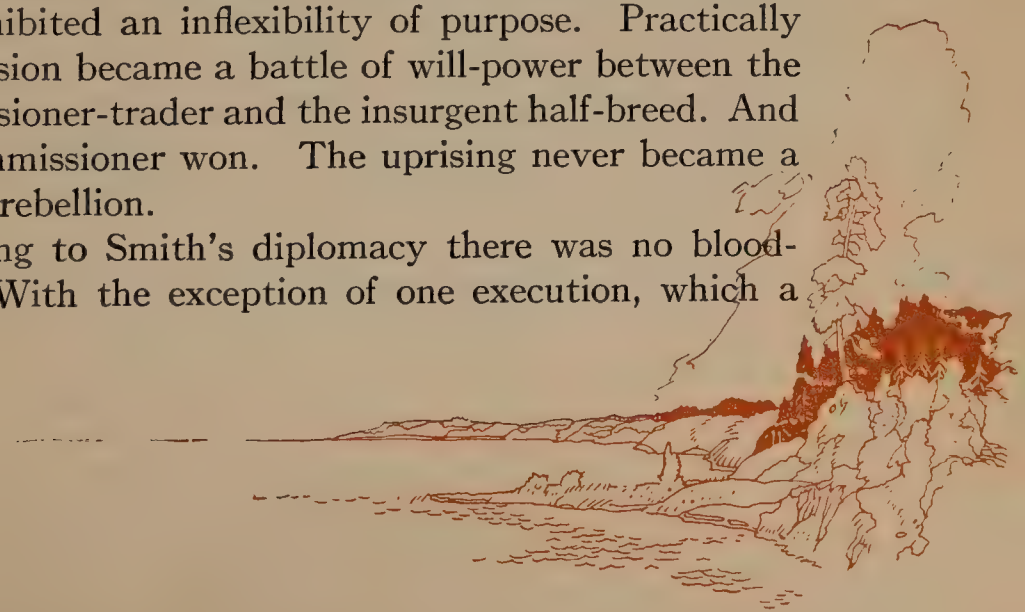
An Eastern post of the Hudson's Bay Company

conflicting interests, they certainly gave him tremendous power in all directions.

This is not the place to give a history of the short lived Riel Rebellion. The French half-breed, Louis Riel, placed himself at the head of a considerable number of the people of the North West, who imagined they had a grievance against the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian Government. The exact nature of the grievance, or its origin, has, perhaps never been known. There are several theories; the one generally accepted being a reluctance to being absorbed by the Canadian Government. There is little doubt that Riel was a man personally ambitious; desirous at first of becoming president of an independent republic. Realizing the impossibility of this he favoured annexation with the American Republic. Then he became merely an embittered rebel.

When Smith arrived at Fort Garry, Riel commanded a considerable following; he had proclaimed himself President and formed a provisional government. The situation was one of great difficulty and danger. Smith, with the experience of years of unofficial authority over Indians and half-breeds in Labrador to guide him, handled the situation in a masterly manner. He refused to be intimidated; he treated Riel with respect, but exhibited an inflexibility of purpose. Practically the mission became a battle of will-power between the commissioner-trader and the insurgent half-breed. And the commissioner won. The uprising never became a serious rebellion.

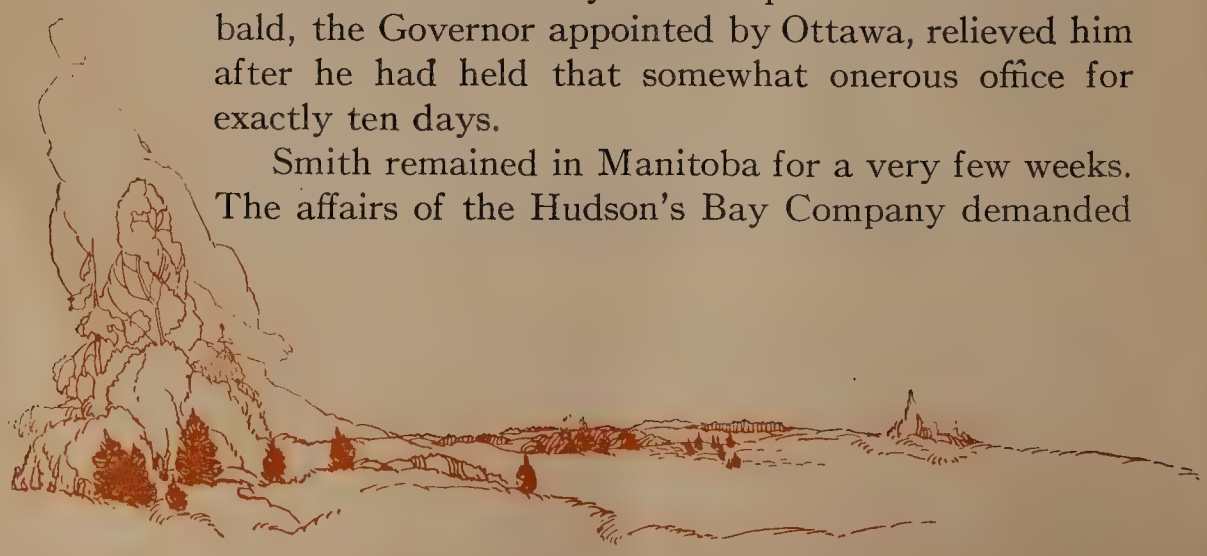
Owing to Smith's diplomacy there was no bloodshed. With the exception of one execution, which a



majority of people count a cold blooded murder, there were no casualties—though the atmosphere of Fort Garry at that period was electric with rumours of massacre and rapine and madness. Smith's methods were peculiar. They were not those which could be followed by the normal, conventional commissioner. They even included the wholesale bribery of French half-breeds, in a successful endeavour to form a party in opposition to Riel. But Smith was not a normal commissioner; neither was the uprising a conventional affair. Donald Smith succeeded in squashing Riel's first attempt at rebellion, and subsequently he received the thanks of Parliament and of the Governor.

The year 1870 was one of momentous importance to the North West. It witnessed the passing of the Manitoba Act, and so the creation of the first of the great provinces of the West. Also it was the year of the Wolseley expedition to Red River; an expedition which successfully suppressed the second Riel uprising, and without a shot being fired, saw the Union Jack once more hoisted above Fort Garry. The first Manitoba Legislature was formed in the same year, and Smith was one of the first elected members. He had accompanied Wolseley in his military movement, and at the request of that officer—who was invested with no power for civil government—for a short period acted as Governor of the newly created province. Mr. Archibald, the Governor appointed by Ottawa, relieved him after he had held that somewhat onerous office for exactly ten days.

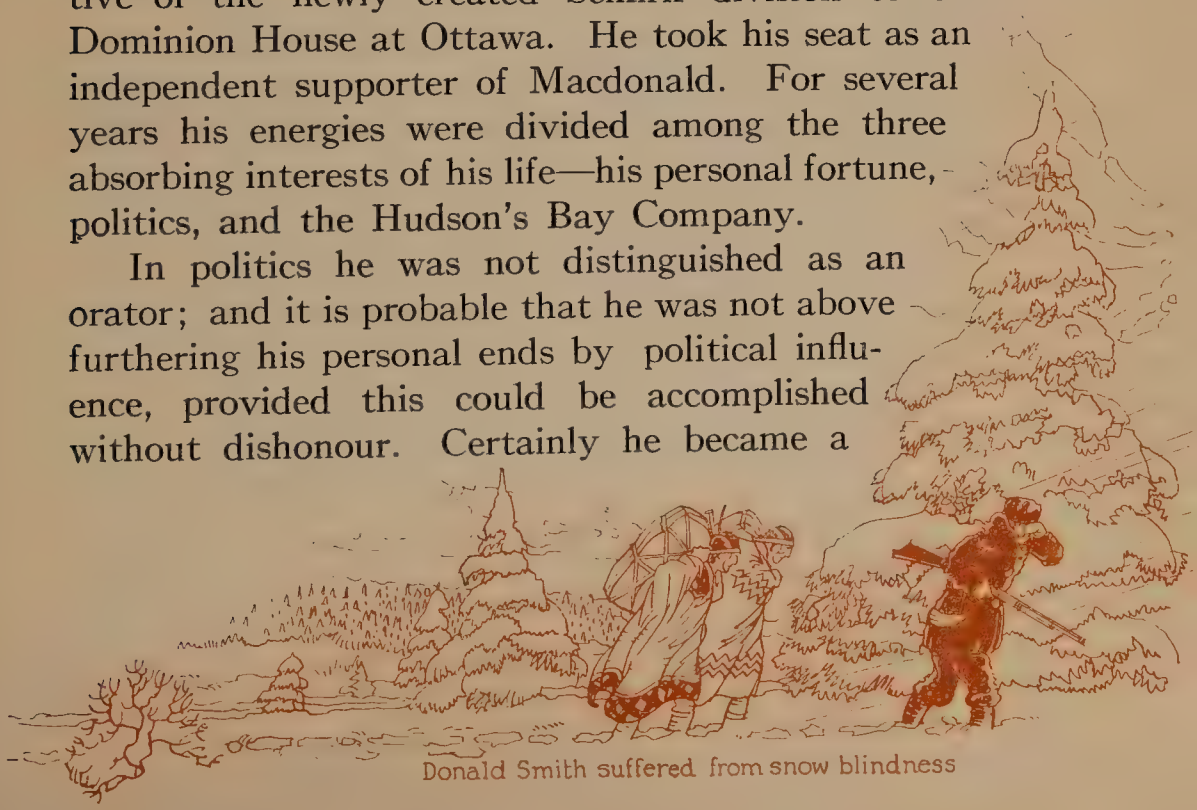
Smith remained in Manitoba for a very few weeks. The affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company demanded



his attention. Much discontent existed among the chief-factors and other officials and pensioners of the Company, in regard to the distribution—or lack of distribution—among the "wintering partners" of the 300,000 pounds ($1,500,000) paid by Canada, for the North West Territories. These officials looked to Smith to champion their cause. His presence was necessary in London, and thither he journeyed early in '71. As an official of the Company he naturally sympathized with the grievances of his colleagues—grievances which he shared. But it is to be feared that his advocacy—strong and unselfish though it was—brought inadequate consolation to the Hudson's Bay staff; though the terms secured were the best obtainable, and at that time all parties seemed moderately satisfied.

Donald Smith returned to Fort Garry where, with the shrewdness of a Scot with capital at his command, he was able to make a multitude of profitable investments. His fortune began to assume considerable dimensions. In '71 he had been elected as representative of the newly created Selkirk division to the Dominion House at Ottawa. He took his seat as an independent supporter of Macdonald. For several years his energies were divided among the three absorbing interests of his life—his personal fortune, politics, and the Hudson's Bay Company.

In politics he was not distinguished as an orator; and it is probable that he was not above furthering his personal ends by political influence, provided this could be accomplished without dishonour. Certainly he became a



Donald Smith suffered from snow blindness

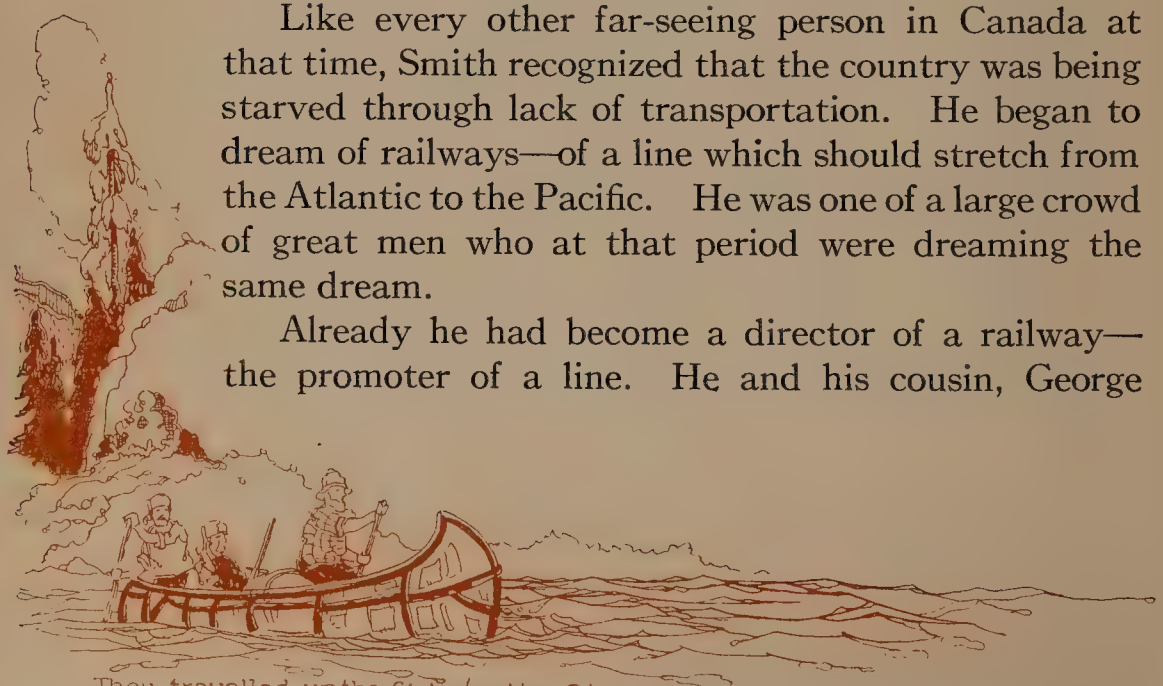
power at Ottawa. His independence afforded him the advantage of being a person to be reckoned with, and his great knowledge of the country—especially the East and the West—gave him a distinction which lifted him far above the average private member.

Of his dealings with the Hudson's Bay Company at this period it is difficult to form a really sound judgment. He made friends, and he made enemies. The fur trading branch of the great Company had declined enormously because of the arrival of multitudes of new settlers, and the formation of countless new townships. The work of the old wintering partners—the men who traded in distant posts with Indians and half-breed trappers—almost disappeared. The whole complexion of the Company changed; its interest in the fur trade became subordinate to its territorial wealth; as the owner of millions of acres of land throughout the Dominion, the Company became a vast organization for the sale of these acres.

In 1873 Smith resigned from his position of "superintendent of the fur trade and commerical business" and became the representative of the Company "in respect of their important landed interests."

Like every other far-seeing person in Canada at that time, Smith recognized that the country was being starved through lack of transportation. He began to dream of railways—of a line which should stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He was one of a large crowd of great men who at that period were dreaming the same dream.

Already he had become a director of a railway—the promoter of a line. He and his cousin, George

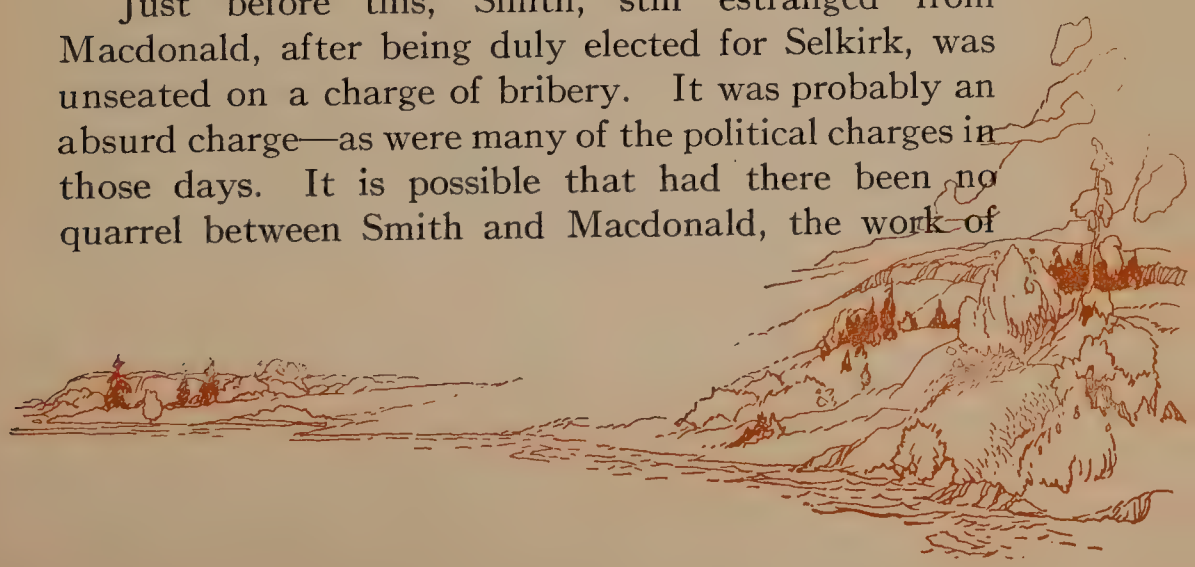


They travelled up the St. Augustine River

Stephen, with James J. Hill and one or two other men, had purchased the bankrupt St. Paul-Pacific Line, reconstructed it, and converted it into a great and successful concern. The main factor in that transaction had been George Stephen, who, as the chief capitalist, played the major part. But Hill and Donald Smith were the heroes of the enterprise.

All this happened during the years of Canada's political unrest; the years of the Pacific and other scandals. A great deal of turmoil surged around the proposition of the transcontinental railway. Its construction suggested possibilities of colossal profit to many coteries of financiers—Canadian, American and European financiers—with the result that various political intrigues came into existence. It was even made a party question—the Conservatives favoured one method, the Liberals another. Few members were free from suspicion of bribery from one or another group of financiers. The situation was grotesquely impossible. Macdonald's Government fell before the storm; the destruction of his Government caused a serious break in the friendship which existed between Macdonald and Donald Smith. The Liberal Government in its turn attempted to construct the line, but failed. Macdonald came into power again, and at long last the great work was commenced in earnest.

Just before this, Smith, still estranged from Macdonald, after being duly elected for Selkirk, was unseated on a charge of bribery. It was probably an absurd charge—as were many of the political charges in those days. It is possible that had there been no quarrel between Smith and Macdonald, the work of



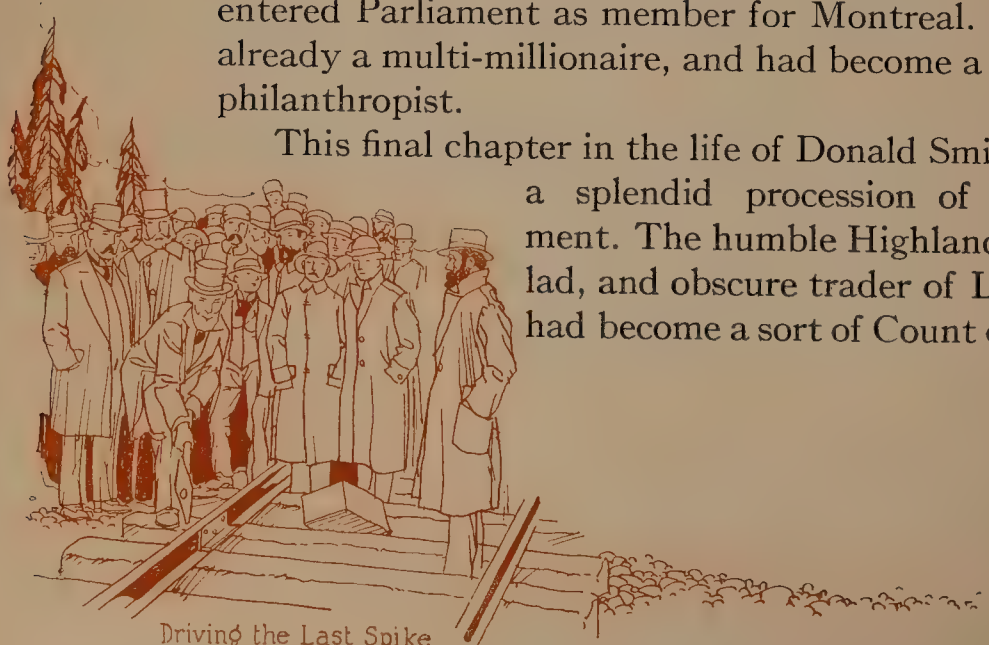
financing the transcontinental would have proved less difficult to the Government.

Nevertheless, Smith had a large hand in the building of the line. He and his cousin Stephen were its chief financiers; in fact, they were the actual leaders of the project, though Smith had to be kept in the background since his name remained distasteful to Macdonald.

The great undertaking was finished at last and the Canadian Pacific Railway became a reality. It would be absurd to point to any one man and say "he was mainly responsible for its completion," or "for its inception." But for this great accomplishment in railway building no man has right to a larger measure of praise than has Donald Smith. It was he who, on November 7th, 1885, drove in the last spike to commemorate the completion of the line. At that time he had just completed the sixty-fifth year of his age.

From this period began the third chapter in the life of Donald Smith. In 1886 Macdonald became reconciled with Smith, and in that year Queen Victoria signified her approval of the energetic Scot by making him a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George. As Sir Donald Smith, K.C.M.G., he re-entered Parliament as member for Montreal. He was already a multi-millionaire, and had become a practical philanthropist.

This final chapter in the life of Donald Smith shows a splendid procession of achievement. The humble Highland cottage lad, and obscure trader of Labrador, had become a sort of Count of Monte



Driving the Last Spike

Cristo. For a few years he remained in Canada, doing excellent political work at Ottawa, and establishing magnificent charities throughout the Dominion. Then he was appointed High Commissioner for Canada in London. This position he relinquished only when relieved by death.

He grew old splendidly, and though he lived to the age of ninety-four he knew no declining years, for at the end he was as vigorous as he was in middle age. A splendid man. We have no space to tell of the work he did in England and Europe for Canada. Never was a country served better by her Ambassador. For Canada and the Empire during the African War he raised and equipped, at his own expense, a regiment of cavalry—Strathcona's Horse. To charity he gave millions of dollars during his lifetime, and at death bequeathed more millions. To Canada he gave unfailing service, for which he refused any reward, save the honours conferred upon him by Queen Victoria, at the request of various Dominion Governments, of Knighthood, and Peerage. Donald Alexander Smith he was born, a poor Highland lad; Sir Donald Smith, Lord Strathcona of England and Mount Royal of Canada he died; a man splendid and serene; a Great Canadian, world famous.